

# PRESIDENT TRUMAN AND (THE CHALLENGE OF) THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE 1945

A Monograph

by

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This monograph examines how U.S. President Harry S. Truman was prepared for the Potsdam Conference from 17 July to 2 August 1945 which is seen as a crucial turning point in modern history. Reviewing his preparations and assessing his actions during the actual conference allows one to examine whether Truman had a strategy for the Potsdam Conference in 1945 with achievable objectives. This monograph argues that Truman did have a strategy for the Potsdam Conference, which was coordinated with Roosevelt's former advisors, the Department of State, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Truman's goals were not achieved in their entirety as the new President found himself confronted by the challenges of international policy and had to adapt his strategy during the conference for various reasons. The method used in this monograph to analyze the U.S. strategy towards the Potsdam Conference is drawn from the contemporary U.S. design methodology outlined in Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning. Using the design methodology, the monograph will emulate a strategy, as it could have been formulated by Truman advisors in 1945. Having this strategy the monograph evaluates the events of the Potsdam conference day by day and assesses the reasons why there was a requirement for an adjustment in Truman's strategy during the conference and why he changed his course of action.

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## ABSTRACT

PRESIDENT TRUMAN AND (THE CHALLENGE OF) THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE 1945, by COL(GS) Uwe F. Jansohn, German Army, 94 pages.

This monograph examines how U.S. President Harry S. Truman was prepared for the Potsdam Conference from 17 July to 2 August 1945 which is seen as a crucial turning point in modern history. Reviewing his preparations and assessing his actions during the actual conference allows one to examine whether Truman had a strategy for the Potsdam Conference in 1945 with achievable objectives. This monograph argues that Truman did have a strategy for the Potsdam Conference, which was coordinated with Roosevelt's former advisors, the Department of State, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nevertheless, this strategy diverged from Roosevelt's original intent. Truman's goals were not achieved in their entirety as the new President found himself confronted by the challenges of international policy and had to adapt his strategy during the conference for various reasons.

The method used in this monograph to analyze the U.S. strategy towards the Potsdam Conference is drawn from the contemporary U.S. design methodology outlined in Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning. There does not exist one comprehensive document which provided Truman a strategic approach for the conference in understanding the ends, ways, and means that was clearly defined. The monograph shows, that the preparing papers were more a conglomeration of documents containing a mix of background information, objectives, and ideas. Using the design methodology, the monograph will emulate a strategy, as it could have been formulated by Truman advisors in 1945. Having this strategy the monograph evaluates the events of the Potsdam conference day by day and assesses the reasons why there was a requirement for an adjustment in Truman's strategy during the conference and why he changed his course of action. The monograph also provides an assessment of whether Truman had an opportunity to avoid the start of the Cold War in Potsdam.

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## INTRODUCTION

I reached the White House about 5:25 P.M. and was immediately taken in the elevator to the second floor and ushered into Mrs. Roosevelt's study...I knew at once that something unusual had taken place. Mrs. Roosevelt seemed calm in her characteristic, graceful dignity. She stepped forward and placed her hand gently about my shoulder. "Harry," she said quietly, "the President is dead." For a moment I could not bring myself to speak... "Is there anything I can do for you?" I asked at last. I shall never forget her deeply understanding reply. "Is there anything we can do for your?" she asked. "For you are the one in trouble now."

—Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup>

When Vice President Harry S. Truman heard Mrs. Roosevelt's serious reply on 12 April 1945, it became clear to him that the trouble Mrs. Roosevelt mentioned would not be far away. President Roosevelt had died. Brought aboard on the democratic ticket as Vice President at a last minute, Truman had little expertise in foreign affairs. Dennis Merrill described Truman as, "sixty years of age, gray and bespectacled, and of shorter than average height, he seemed an accidental president--only badly miscast for his role."<sup>2</sup> Yet Truman soon put his own stamp on the Presidency, so much that a lot of historians typically refer to his years in the White House from 1945 to 1953 as the 'Truman Era'. Above all, the Truman years were a time of profound and historic change. The "accidental president oversaw the end of World War II, the drawing of the atomic age, America's embrace of new international responsibilities, and the origins of the Soviet-American Cold War."<sup>3</sup>

One of Truman's first important tasks was to attend the Potsdam Conference three months after being sworn into office. There he would meet the Soviet General Secretary Joseph

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<sup>1</sup>Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955-56), 5.

<sup>2</sup>Dennis Merrill, ed., *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency* Vol. 2: *Planning for the Postwar World: President Truman at the Potsdam conference, July 17-August 2, 1945* (University Publications of America, An Imprint of CIS, 1995), 19.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*



Stalin and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill for the last great summit of World War II. The Potsdam Conference was held from 16 July to 2 August 1945. The three leaders of the “Grand Alliance” or the “Big Three” gathered primarily to decide how to handle the defeated German Reich, which had agreed to unconditional surrender nine weeks earlier. The aims of the conference were the establishment of a post-war order, the coordination of the further course of action for the Far East, and the introduction of a peacemaking and consultative machinery. Despite the fact that the communiqué, which they issued at the end of the conference, gave the impression of allied unanimity, several critical issues were not decided upon by the three allies. These lingering issues were to be answered by a final peace conference, to be called as soon as possible. Hence, the future of Germany was left open as were several other European problems. All of them would contribute to the beginning of the Cold War in the aftermath. The question of whether Truman and Stalin could have avoided the Cold War in Potsdam engaged historians for the next 60 years.

This monograph examines how the new president, who was a savvy domestic politician with limited experience in foreign affairs, prepared himself for this conference which is seen as a crucial turning point in modern history. Reviewing his preparations and assessing his actions during the actual conference allows one to examine whether Truman had a strategy for the Potsdam Conference in 1945 with achievable objectives. This monograph argues that Truman did have a strategy for the Potsdam Conference, which was coordinated with Roosevelt’s former advisors, the Department of State, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nevertheless, this strategy diverged from Roosevelt’s original intent. Truman’s goals were not achieved in their entirety as the new President found himself confronted by the challenges of international policy and had to adapt his strategy during the conference for various reasons.

The method used in this monograph to analyze the U.S. strategy towards the Potsdam Conference is drawn from the contemporary U.S. design methodology outlined in Joint

Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*. The first section provides a historical review on how the U.S. strategy was developed from the conference of the Big Three in Yalta (4-11 February 1945) to the Potsdam Conference, and especially what adjustments were made after Roosevelt's death. This section examines the process, that is, how Truman's personal strategy was developed. When the term "strategy" is used it is understood as the triad of ends, ways, and means. Strategy is the long term plan to achieve ends using various ways by employing regularly limited means. It is about the question on what strategic approach the U.S., under the lead of their new president, should undertake to achieve the desired U.S. end state, which is discussed in this section. Nonetheless, no one comprehensive document stated Truman's strategic approach for the conference in understanding the ends, ways, and means that was clearly defined. The briefing papers were more a conglomeration of documents containing a mix of background information, objectives, and ideas. Following the U.S. military design methodology, the study examines how Truman and his staff of advisors—supported by their skills, knowledge, and imagination—applied their creative imagination to achieve their goals and how the process of iterative understanding and problem framing was conducted.<sup>4</sup> Following the U.S. military design methodology approach, this section starts with the examination of the strategic environment Truman had to face when he took the Presidency. It examines the nature of the situation, the relevant actors, their agenda, and the strategy which Truman inherited from Roosevelt. The agreements already put in place in Yalta provide an anchorpoint for a first assessment. Following the design methodology, Truman's, Churchill's, and Stalin's desired end states are outlined. Truman's challenges are framed in a problem statement. In this context, the section outlines the

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<sup>4</sup>This methodology is described in detail in, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), III, 1-18.

problems coming up after Yalta and identifies the areas of tension, as well as the motivations and the goals among the relevant actors together with the relationship among them? The section ends with a consideration of Truman's strategic approach to solve the problem. This part examines what ways, by employing what means, would solve his problem and how he could transform the situation towards his desired end state. This section reviews the process by which Truman took command and how his preparations for the conference were conducted. One key question that is explored is how well formulated was the U.S. strategy for the postwar world in the time after Roosevelt's death? The review demonstrates that the strategy was more a mixture of objectives, approaches, general policies, individual thoughts, and detailed catalogues of measures that he received from his advisors. Nevertheless, if all these facets are merged, one can recognize an overall strategy. To be stringent with the chosen methodology this section follows the required steps of the design methodology.

Section Two documents what happened during the Potsdam Conference day-by-day. This approach helps to understand when exactly and why the U.S. delegation departed from its strategic approach. It examines the key-player's points of view and it ascertains when and where Truman deviated from his strategy. The result of the conference, outlined in the Potsdam Proclamation of the Heads of Government, is summarized. This section concludes with a comparison of the desired U.S. objectives versus the achieved ones.

Finally, Section Three assesses the reasons why there was a requirement for an adjustment in Truman's strategy during the conference and why he changed his course of action. In this context, the study examines whether Stalin acted differently than was assumed by Truman. This portion focuses on whether Truman made a wrong assessment of Stalin's possible reaction to his announcement of the intended use of the atomic bomb to attack Japan. Furthermore, Truman's team of advisors and their involvement in the decision-making during the conference will also be discussed. This section also examines the impact of the results of the British general

elections of 25 July 1945, which resulted in Attlee's Labor government replacing Churchill's wartime coalition government.

The final section also delivers an assessment of whether Truman had an opportunity to avoid the start of the Cold War in Potsdam.<sup>5</sup> Until the 1960s, most historians in Germany as well as in the U.S. came to the conclusion that the Cold War was the direct result of the aggressive Soviet expansionism. Allocation of blame was simple—Stalin was to blame. He started the Cold War at the Potsdam Conference. Truman performed well and did everything possible but failed at the end because of Stalin's stubbornness.

This view of the outcome of the Potsdam Conference, as the beginning of the Cold War, has never really gone away by the so-called "traditionalists" in Germany as well as in the Anglo-American environment. There have always been people who have seen the Soviet Union as the cause of the confrontation. Nevertheless, three other schools of thoughts have been developed over the years. The "revisionists" blame the U.S. for causing the cold war contending that Truman decided to drop the atomic bomb shortly after the Potsdam Conference in order to intimidate the Soviet-Union. Another group of historians, the "post-revisionists," present the foundations of the Cold War as neither the fault of the U.S. or the Soviet Union. They believe that both sides wanted to keep peace after the war but the conflict was caused by mutual misunderstanding, reactivity and Truman's inability to understand Stalin's fear and the suspicion and rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Finally, there is the "Post-1991" school portraying the Cold War as a clash of ideologies caused by the cultural differences between the communist and the capitalist society. Today the archives of the Great Powers are more or less

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<sup>5</sup>Not everyone agrees as to when the Cold War began. Some argue it started in Potsdam, others say in 1947 with the Truman doctrine, others argued it happened 1948 because of the Czechoslovakian coup, the Brussels Pact and the Berlin Airlift operation.

open. Especially the Post-1991 school benefits from seeing de-classified Russian documents and having the opportunity to investigate what Russia was really about in this period.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The essential starting point for the study of the Truman Presidency is the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri. As one of the Presidential Libraries, the Harry S. Truman Library promotes the understanding of the Presidency and the American experience. A number of published documentary collections are also valuable. It preserves and provides access to a multitude of historical materials and supports researchers. The most beneficial sources were the *Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53*, which included the Department of State's and Joint Chief of Staff's documents for the preparation of President Truman with regard to the Potsdam Conference and the *Map room Files*. These files contain the mail exchange between Truman, Churchill and Stalin, all the preparatory documents, and all the protocols and transcripts of the meetings conducted in Potsdam. A number of published documentary collections are also valuable. *The Documentary History of the Truman Presidency* and the U. S. Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers* are very beneficial in this respect. In the former, Volume 2: *Planning for the Postwar World: President Truman at the Potsdam Conference, July 17–August 2, 1945* is most relevant. In the latter, there is a volume dedicated to the Potsdam conference.

The *Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries*, the almost daily entries of Presidents Roosevelt's and Truman's Secretary of War (1940-45), were another useful source for this monograph. Although Stimson did not belong to the closest inner circle of Truman's advisors, the President respected and liked him. Stimson went to Potsdam from 15 July to 25 July 1945, but did not take part in the actual formal conference events. Nevertheless, his diaries provide a strongly expressed view on the conference participants, the main issues, and the events from an "observer's" perspective.

A number of memoirs provide insights into the participants in the Potsdam conference. These include memoirs by principals such as Harry S. Truman and Winston Churchill. There are also perspectives from a number of advisors (Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, James F. Byrnes). Leahy's book *I Was There* (1950) provides the view of a contemporary witness of the events in Potsdam. Having been the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and based on his notes and diaries made at that time, Admiral Leahy presents valuable background information on how Truman prepared himself for the Potsdam Conference. He provides an insider perspective on the rationale behind the President's decisions and actions. However, the book also reflects the hardening of the cold War, which was well under way by 1950.

Despite the fact that memoirs sometimes tend to brighten the actions of the respective author, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman* (1955) were without question a helpful primary source. They are detailed and candid and provide a great deal of insight into crucial political decisions he made between 1945 and 1952. Looking back in 1955, Truman assessed and justified his actions and motivations openly. Further insight was provided by the *Memoirs of the Second World War* (1948) written by the British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill—awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953—and *Speaking Frankly* (1947) by the U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. It can be said that Truman, Churchill, Leahy and Byrnes were all advocates of the traditional view ascribing the Cold War to Soviet behavior.

Herbert Feis described and evaluated, with deep insight, the events in Potsdam in three books which appeared in the sixties and early seventies. *Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference* (1960) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1961. Two other books, *The Atomic Bomb and the end of World War II* (1966) and *From Trust to Terror* (1972) followed. They are the early historical works which reviewed the start of the Cold War more critically and introduced a revision to the more one-sided view of the traditionalist's school on the question of guilt for the Cold War. During the war Feis served as an economic advisor to the U.S.

Department of State and as special consultant to the Secretary of War. So he was both a historian and a privileged insider.

John Lewis Gaddis's *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (1972) is a critical analysis of the actions of President Truman, British Prime Ministers Churchill and Attlee, as well as General Secretary Stalin, whose personality he sees as one of the causes of the Cold War. Benefitting from the growing availability of U.S. government documents in the seventies, Gaddis's later works are most associated with the concept of "post-revisionism." He uses a broad approach in his assessment of the conference events by looking not only at U.S. economic interests but also taking individual personalities, perceptions of Soviet intentions, U.S. domestic politics, and bureaucratic sluggishness in account.

Charles L. Mee, one of the first historians to utilize declassified U.S. conference transcripts, merged these fresh insights with logbooks and eyewitness accounts to reconstruct the events of the conference in his book *Meeting at Potsdam* published in 1975. Mee proves that the U.S. primary motivation, to create a peaceful post World War II order was destined to be sacrificed for national economic interest. Mee critically reviews the actions of President Truman and his British counterparts.

Vojtech Mastny's *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (1979) is the first comprehensive study of the events and policies that led the Soviet Union irrevocably into the Cold War. Mastny's main conclusion, that the demands of the Soviet system were the true cause of the Cold War may not go unchallenged, but his detailed assessment of the Potsdam Conference provided insight into Stalin's desire for Soviet control of Eastern Europe. Gerhard L. Weinberg's *Visions of Victory* (2005) delivered further insights in Stalin's and Churchill's visions of a post-war Europe.

Two books written by Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (2007), for which he received the Harry S. Truman Book Award, and *The Most Controversial Decision—Truman, the Atomic Bombs, and the Defeat of Japan*

(2011) are thoughtful researched books which benefitted from the finally opened archives of the main actors. Notably, the former is a careful study of the critical presidential transition at the heart of this inquiry. Carefully and critically, Miscamble reviews how President Truman tried to follow the policy of the deceased President Roosevelt.

Norman A. Graebner, Richard Dean Burns and Joseph M. Siracusa have published *America and the Cold War, 1941-1991* (2010). The study offers a comprehensive chronicle of U.S.-Soviet relations, broadly conceived, from World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The book is a convincing historical account that focuses on the policy differences of the two nations at the center of the Cold war. The three authors offer an examination of contemporary criticism of the conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, documenting the perspectives of observers who appreciated that many policies of the period were not only dangerous, but could not resolve the problems they contemplated.

The available literature provides a good understanding of the events which occurred prior to the Potsdam Conference and which influenced Truman's strategy development. The U.S., the Soviet, and the British perspectives and assessments are available. Nevertheless Truman's strategic approach has never been brought together in one single and clear description bringing ends, ways, and means together. The reason that this was not yet undertaken lies in the character of the preparatory papers for the conference prepared by State Department and the Joint Chiefs, which are more a mixture of objectives, approaches, general policies, measures to be undertaken, and individual thoughts. This monograph suggests such a strategic approach using a contemporary methodology. The available literature thoroughly covers the events, the decisions and the adjustments of Truman's policy during the Potsdam Conference, since the minutes of what was exactly said are now accessible. Nevertheless, a day-by-day assessment has never been ventured. Even Mee, who is very precise in his review, sums up several days hence the exact



determination when a strategy shift occurred is difficult to determine exactly. This monograph tries to identify the actual events which triggered Truman's adaptation.

### From Roosevelt to Truman—The Development of a Strategy for the Potsdam Conference

There was an agreement at Yalta...to reorganize the Provisional Government now functioning in Warsaw in order to establish a new government of national Unity in Poland by means of previous consultation between representatives of the Provisional Polish Government of Warsaw and other Polish democratic leaders from Poland and from abroad....Mr. Molotov repeated that his government supported the Crimea decisions but could not agree that an abrogation of those decision by others could be considered a violation by the Soviet government.... Since Molotov insisted on avoiding the main issue...I expressed once more the desire of the U.S. for friendship with Russia, but I wanted it clearly understood that this could be only on a basis of the mutual observation of agreements and not on the basis of a one-way street. "I have never been talked to like that in my life," Molotov said. I told him, "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."<sup>6</sup>

### General

Truman became President in the midst of a debate over how to win the war and shape the peace. At the center of these questions were U.S.-Soviet relations. The above quote demonstrated one of the challenges the new president had to face after Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945. The Yalta Conference had met from 4-11 February 1945. With victory close at hand, Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill had discussed Europe's postwar reorganization. Poland had been given back its independence and an adjusted territory.

Ostensibly the Big Three agreed upon free elections for the new governments in eastern Europe. Germany had to surrender unconditionally, would be a split in occupation zones, would be demilitarized, and would pay reparations to the Allied powers.

Within days after the Yalta conference Stalin revealed his own interpretation by confirming his established occupation policies in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and elsewhere. In Poland a pro-Soviet government was established in which, the exiled Polish government in

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<sup>6</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 81-82.

London was not allowed to participate. W. Averell Harriman, the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, warned Roosevelt at the end of March 1945 that such Soviet behavior, “unless countered effectively, would nullify the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe, with its promise on self-determination.”<sup>7</sup> Throughout March, Vice President Truman received little information on the Yalta agreements. He was not briefed by either Roosevelt himself or representatives from the U.S. State or War departments. On 12 April 1945 Roosevelt died. Truman inherited numerous challenges. Among these was his first engagement with Vladislav Molotov, Stalin’s Foreign Minister. Molotov was en route to San Francisco to attend the United Nations conference. Within ten days of becoming president, Truman would meet with Molotov for the first time. In this brief period, the new president had to gain an understanding of his predecessor’s policies and to formulate his own approach to concluding the war and winning the peace. To understand Truman’s response, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the key actors.

### The Actors

The first relevant actor to be examined is Truman himself. Overly simplified views of the new president portrayed him as a veritable blank sheet with regard to foreign policy, but he was actually not the “rookie” as he was depicted by several historians. As a senator, Truman was clearly involved in investigating the national defense effort. He was a driving force calling for a strong national defense. In the Senate he was chair of the special committee that investigated the national defense program, a task he fulfilled with great enthusiasm.<sup>8</sup> In a speech he gave as senator from Missouri in June 1941, he delivered the snap judgment, that “Germany and Russia

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<sup>7</sup>Norman A. Graebner, Richard Dean Burns, and Joseph M. Siracusa, *America and the Cold War* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2010), 66.

<sup>8</sup>Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

should fight each other to death, with the U.S. helping whichever side was losing.” After the U.S. entered the war, Truman loyally supported Roosevelt’s foreign policy, which made him an attractive candidate when Roosevelt was looking for a running mate.<sup>9</sup> In a speech Truman gave to the United Nations forum in Washington, DC, he echoed Roosevelt’s ideas of how the post-war world could be run properly. “For a lasting peace” the world needed a new improved League of Nations made up of the United Nations and leadership by Britain, China, Russia, and the United States. Future wars could be prevented “by creating a new machine of peace more powerful than any machine of war, with a powerful international police force as its means of enforcement.” Truman’s vision for the future included not only political cooperation between nations, but also economic collaboration among them.<sup>10</sup> American isolationism, in Truman’s view, was the greatest threat to American participation in a world organization and to its world leadership.<sup>11</sup>

Quoting several of Truman’s close companions, Miscamble described Truman as a president with qualities. He was indeed “a person of tough fiber, plain, warm manners, direct approach and earthy humor who possessed both courage and the capacity to make decisions.” He had a preference for “clear fixed standards and his decisions were the product of careful political and diplomatic planning and group consensus.”<sup>12</sup> Stimson was deeply affected by Truman who made the impression on him of a man who was “willing and anxious to learn and to do his best but who was necessarily laboring with the terrific handicap of coming into such an office where

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<sup>9</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 198.

<sup>10</sup>Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 22.

<sup>11</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 22.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 87-89.

the threats of information were so multitudinous that only long previous familiarity could allow him to control them.”<sup>13</sup>

Miscamble characterized Truman’s inheritance as, “Roosevelt’s uncertain legacy.” Miscamble argued that “the road for Truman and the American foreign policy was not so clearly mapped, when Roosevelt died.” Roosevelt had a vision of the postwar world that was increasingly at odds with the diplomatic realities. Miscamble assessed that “Roosevelt’s grand vision set the expectation of most Americans, including Truman, regarding the postwar future, but neither captured the true state of the relationship among the major powers nor hinted at the issues over which they differed.”<sup>14</sup> Roosevelt had developed a good personal relationship with Stalin and Churchill during the war. His sudden death prevented a transfer of this long lived partnership to Truman. Generally, the assessment can be made that Roosevelt did not prepare a handover for his successor.

Consequently, at the time of Roosevelt’s death on 12 April 1945, Truman lacked a clear and detailed idea of Roosevelt’s strategic ideas. He brought to the Presidency a firm belief that a peaceful postwar world depended upon the U.S. creating a world leadership in the political and economic spheres. Truman had no significant reservations concerning the policies and the goals of Franklin Roosevelt as he understood them.<sup>15</sup>

Truman became president in the midst of a debate over the course of action on how to deal with the Soviets. The disagreement over the Yalta accords, the potentially explosive Polish issue (due to Soviet non-compliance to the Yalta agreement), the dispute over the composition of other Eastern European governments, and the differences over German matters troubled many in

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<sup>13</sup>Henry L. Stimson, *Henry Stimson Diaries* (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1973), Reel 9, 865.

<sup>14</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 34.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-32.

the Department of State. Truman inherited a government grumbling with dissent. Until Roosevelt died, the president had personally determined the direction of American diplomacy without seeking advice from the Department of State and then told the Department of State how to implement his directions. Truman reversed this practice immediately; he made policy after consultation with his foreign affairs experts.<sup>16</sup>

Roosevelt had made use of a wide variety of official and unofficial advisors. Truman, in contrast was at first prone to use official advisors. The cabinet he inherited from Roosevelt included Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau. In addition, Roosevelt had relied on Admiral William Leahy, his Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, Admiral Ernest King, and General Hap Arnold. The latter three composed the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, Averell Harriman (Ambassador to the Soviet Union) and Harry Lloyd Hopkins (the administrator of the Lend-Lease program) had played important roles as further close advisors to Roosevelt. Senator James F. Byrnes and Joseph Davies, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union, would soon join Truman's team of advisors. To categorize the direction of the kind of advice Truman received from his team of advisors, this study uses the term "hawks" for those who promoted a hard and strict course against the Soviet Union, while those who advised Truman to take a friendlier approach to the Soviets as "doves."

Secretary of State Stettinius had replaced the long serving Cordell Hull in December 1944. Stettinius had helped to arrange the Dumbarton Oaks conference in the late summer and early fall of 1944. Delegations from the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States discussed proposals for the establishment of an organization to maintain peace and security in the world. Their meetings resulted in the United Nations Charter. Stettinius also accompanied the US

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 83-84.

delegation to the Yalta Conference. Stettinius, as chairman of the US delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization, was instrumental in the formation of the United Nations and was present at its official founding on 26 June 1945. Soon afterward, President Truman requested Stettinius to resign as Secretary of State. He was replaced by James F. Byrnes. Truman had several reasons for his action. The first was the matter of succession to the Presidency. At this time the Secretary of State was de facto first in line of succession, since there was no Vice President. Truman felt that Stettinius, who had not held elective offices, was an inappropriate potential successor. Secondly, many had expected that Byrnes would have been the Democratic nominee for vice president with Roosevelt in 1944. When the nomination went instead to Truman, Truman wanted “to balance things up, when he became president.” And thirdly, Truman thought Byrnes to be the most suitable man for the position.<sup>17</sup> Hence Stettinius played only a very limited role in the formulation of the strategy for Potsdam.

Roosevelt had brought Byrnes to the Yalta Conference in early 1945, where he seemed to favor Soviet plans. When Truman became president, he quickly turned to Byrnes for counsel, which was not surprising given that Byrnes had been Truman’s mentor from his earliest days in the U.S. Senate. Indeed, Byrnes was one of the first people whom Truman saw on the first day of his Presidency. On 3 July 1945, Truman appointed Byrnes as Secretary of State. Byrnes would play a major role at the Potsdam Conference. He set the tone of future U.S. policy, repudiating the Morgenthau Plan, a plan to dismantle the German industrial base after capitulation (discussed in more detail in a following sub-section). Frustrated by the Soviet actions in spring 1945, Byrnes had revised his Yalta attitudes and promoted a hard line stance against the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 22-23.

<sup>18</sup>James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), 67-69.

Admiral Leahy served as Chief of Staff to both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. He had been recalled to active duty for this position 1942 to serve as the President's first military advisor. He was the highest ranking member of the U.S. military and presided over the American delegation to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Potsdam. He had been at the center of all major American military decisions in World War II. He was a key player, who coordinated the contributions to the strategy papers which prepared Truman for the conference in Potsdam. At an early stage in 1945, Leahy became an advocate for the idea of maintaining an economically capable Germany as a bastion against the Soviet Union. In his assessment of the outcome of the Yalta conference, Leahy stated that,

These three men, Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill agreed in Yalta to destroy completely the existing German Government, to disarm and dismember Germany, to destroy any of its industry capable of manufacturing war material, to transfer territory from Germany to Poland that would necessitate the deportation of between seven and ten million inhabitants (if that many survived), and to extract reparations in kind and enforced labor that would practically reduce the existing highly industrialized Germany to the status of two or more agricultural states. I felt sorry for the German people.<sup>19</sup>

Leahy's advice to Truman always promoted a strong American opposition towards the Soviet Union.

The next in the group of "hawks" in the Truman Administration, was Averall Harriman, who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union since 1943. He had served the Roosevelt administration since 1941, initially as a special envoy to Europe and helped to coordinate the Lend-Lease program.<sup>20</sup> As it will be shown later, Harriman believed in the spring of 1945 that

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<sup>19</sup>William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (London and Toronto: Wittlesey House, 1950), 322-323.

<sup>20</sup>The Lend-Lease Act—enacted on March 11, 1941—was the program under which the United States of America supplied Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, Free France, and other Allied nations with materiel between 1941 and 1945. Formally titled An Act to Further Promote the Defense of the United States, the Act effectively ended the United States' pretense of neutrality. This program was a decisive step away from non-isolationist policy, which had dominated United States foreign relations since the end of World War I, towards international

Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union should be limited exclusively to war material that would assist in the common war effort in Asia and not be provided for any other purpose, for example, to the further buildup the Soviet forces in Central Europe.<sup>21</sup> He had also attended the Yalta Conference, where he encouraged Roosevelt to take a stronger line with the Soviet Union, especially on questions concerning Poland.

Harriman retained a strong posture towards the Soviet Union in the first weeks of Truman's Presidency proposing to use all available U.S. means to increase pressure on Stalin. Gaddis quotes Harriman, "if the U.S. was to protect its vital interests, it would have to adopt a more positive policy of using the U.S. economic influence to promote her broad political ideals." In early April 1945, Harriman saw no reason why the U.S. should expedite reparations from Germany, which is one subject to which the Soviet government was most anxious to get the U.S. committed." On 10 April 1945 he requested authority from President Roosevelt to inform Stalin directly that if the Soviet Government continued its policies the friendly hand that the U.S. had offered them would be withdrawn. However, Roosevelt was unwilling to do so, and ordered Harriman to back off.<sup>22</sup>

When Truman took over the Presidency it could be said that Byrnes, Leahy, and Harriman were the "hawks," who promoted a hard course in dealing with the Soviet Union. One could also find the "doves" within the administration, who wanted to continue Roosevelt's course of cooperation. The first of them to mention is Truman's initial Secretary of State Stettinius. He was the first to brief Truman on 13 April 1945 on the current diplomatic matters and discussed with him the plans for the upcoming United Nations conference in San Francisco. Furthermore,

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involvement. Encyclopedia Britannica, "Lend-Lease," Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/335831/lend-lease> (accessed 1 February 2013).

<sup>21</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 351.

<sup>22</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 216-217.



he had to provide the first report on the background and the present status of the principle problems the U.S was confronted with in its relations to other countries. More reports would follow frequently and were helpful in filling gaps in Truman's information.<sup>23</sup> Stettinius's role in the preparation of the Potsdam Conference was limited because his focus was totally on the preparations for the United Nations conference. Stettinius took the chance at this meeting to introduce Hopkins as an ideal advisor. He explained to Truman, "that Hopkins had an extremely important and unique relationship as far as foreign relations were concerned, inasmuch as he was the one person who really thoroughly understood the various ramifications and the relations between Roosevelt and Churchill and Roosevelt and Stalin."<sup>24</sup> Hopkins had been one of Roosevelt's closest advisors; he had been his trouble shooter and was another key policy maker in the \$50 billion Lend Lease program. He tried to resign after Roosevelt died, but Truman would not let him go. Miscamble wrote that, "Truman's eagerness to see Hopkins and his willingness to come before him like a dutiful student before a wise teacher reveals something of Truman's sincerity in regard to continuing Roosevelt's approach towards the Soviet Union."<sup>25</sup> Truman would send Hopkins from 23 May to 12 June 1945 on a mission to Moscow in order to prepare the Potsdam Conference with Stalin.

At the end of April 1945, a new advisor emerged. John Davies was a wealthy Washington lawyer, who had served as Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938. Davies made no effort to disguise his sympathies for the Soviet Union. Roosevelt had utilized Davies as an informal go-between with the Soviets throughout the war in which role he constantly had advocated conciliation and cooperation with Moscow. On Truman's request,

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<sup>23</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 14.

<sup>24</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 97.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 103.

Davies met him on 30 April 1945 and gave a vigorous defense of the Soviet position towards Poland. Miscamble characterized Truman's relationship with Davies as that of a "hardworking but slow witted student trying to get his lesson straight." Davies worried about the deterioration in the Soviet-U.S. relationship.<sup>26</sup> He would become a very trusted advisor by Truman. In several long meetings with Truman he promoted Soviet positions. Since he was in poor health he declined Truman's offer to serve as an emissary to Moscow to prepare the Potsdam meeting with Stalin. Truman wanted Davies's advice because he wanted "personal, on the spot reports from men with judgment and experience." Davies as former Ambassador to the Soviet Union and having maintained his close relationships with the Soviets since then was totally familiar with the Soviet situation. He provided Truman more information than Truman was "able to get from messages and cable and even from telephone conversations."<sup>27</sup> Despite his bad health, Davies would prepare the conference with Churchill from 25 May to 3 June 1945. Davies succeeded in undermining Truman's confidence to "get tough" following the advice he received from officials like Harriman.<sup>28</sup>

Secretary of War Stimson's main focus laid on the development of the atomic bomb. At Potsdam he served primarily in the role of an observer. On 25 April 1945 Stimson briefed Truman for the first time on the atomic bomb outlining that "within four months, the U.S. shall in all probability have completed the most terrible weapon ever known in human history."<sup>29</sup> The briefing should have alerted Truman to the relationship, or more accurately to the potential relationship, between the atomic bomb and the U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union. The

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 134ff.

<sup>27</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 110.

<sup>28</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 141.

<sup>29</sup>Stimson, *Henry Stimson Diaries*, 30.

possession of the atomic bomb could strengthen the U.S. bargaining position. Truman instead focused more on the personal burden of his having to authorize the use of the extraordinary weapon and less on the geopolitical implications.<sup>30</sup>

In line with his desire to continue Roosevelt's policies, Truman spent much of his time consulting with the late President's advisors on Soviet affairs. Former Roosevelt's advisors Hopkins, Davies, and Stimson were all opposed to any hasty confrontation with the Soviet Union. They remained influential during these early days of the Truman administration.<sup>31</sup> Promoters of a tough course towards the Soviet Union included Harriman, Leahy, and Byrnes. They advocated a more confrontational approach towards the Soviet Union as Truman would demonstrate in his meeting with Molotov. The different positions are examined in more detail when the Soviet Union's strategy is discussed later in this chapter. As noted above, Truman took advice from two camps. For Miscamble, "Truman merely muddled through like some struggling student learning in pressured circumstances from a group of rival professors who based their respective instructions on differing assumptions and assessments of the situation at hand."<sup>32</sup> The strategy Truman would chose for Potsdam was mainly influenced by these camps as well as the actions and counteractions of Churchill and Stalin.

On 15 June 1945 Truman set in motion a program of thorough preparation for the Big Three meeting and tasked his advisors to provide their advice. He told Admiral Leahy that he wished to take the initiative and asked to prepare an agenda with the proposed stand on each of the questions that might arise.<sup>33</sup> Byrnes and his Department of State were in lead for the

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<sup>30</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 127-128.

<sup>31</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 200.

<sup>32</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 125.

<sup>33</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 382.

preparation and provided Truman on 30 June 1945 the document “The Berlin Conference, Agenda proposed by the State Department.” Additionally, Truman received the document “The Berlin Conference, Comments and recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff” on June 26, 1945. These documents are discussed later in this section.

### Relevant History: The Yalta Agreement

The results of the Yalta conference provided the historical background for the problems confronting the three Allies in spring of 1945. During the conference Europe's post-war reorganization was basically decided upon. Yalta was the second of three wartime conferences among the Big Three: Great Britain, the U.S., and the Soviet Union. One result was an agreement on the unconditional surrender of Germany. Furthermore, the decision was taken that Germany and Berlin would be split into four occupied zones. The Soviet Union agreed that France would receive a fourth occupation zone in Germany, but it would have to be formed out of the American and British zones. Germany had to undergo demilitarization and denazification. A first agreement on German reparation was achieved. Furthermore, Nazi war criminals were to be hunted down and brought to justice. A Committee on Dismemberment of Germany was to be set up. Its purpose was to decide whether Germany was to be divided into six states. Concerning Poland, it was agreed that the communist Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland that had been installed by the Soviet Union had to be reorganized on a broader democratic basis. Churchill pushed very hard for free elections in Poland. Poland's eastern border would follow the Curzon Line and Poland would receive territorial compensation in the west from Germany.<sup>34</sup> Roosevelt

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<sup>34</sup>The Curzon Line was the demarcation line between Poland and Soviet Russia that was proposed during the Russo-Polish War of 1919–20 as a possible armistice line and became (with a few alterations) the Soviet-Polish border after World War I. That line extended southward from Grodno, passed through Brest-Litovsk, and then followed the Bug River to its junction with the former frontier between the Austrian Empire and Russia. Then the Poles drove further eastwards

obtained a commitment by Stalin to participate in the U.N, but Stalin's request to grant all sixteen Soviet Socialist Republics United Nations memberships was denied. The Soviet Union agreed to enter the fight against Japan within ninety days after the defeat of Germany.

In a short assessment of the Yalta conference it can be said that the outcome did not divide Europe into zones of influence. This was not really in the U.S. intent. No text dealt with the future Soviet rule in Eastern Europe and no text dealt with the establishment of liberal democracies in Western Europe. Yalta could not nullify the Soviet occupation that the U.S. had encouraged for so long in the interest of victory—or Stalin's power to exploit them.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly the future of the Grand Alliance rested on the willingness of Britain and the U.S. to accept the Soviet definition of the Yalta agreements and not contesting the burgeoning Soviet control of Eastern Europe and the Balkans.<sup>36</sup> As Anne Lane and Howard Temperley have written, the three allied leaders had succeeded in “burying the accumulating disagreements in declarations that clouded their transparency, enabling the Grand Alliance to survive the conference apparently unscathed.”<sup>37</sup> Roosevelt accepted this weak compromise because obviously he was still relying on the Soviet Union to carry the major burden of the war in Europe and to contribute significantly to the final defeat of Japan. The normative power of the factual may have triggered the U.S. to

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in the Russo-Polish War. The final peace treaty (concluded in March 1921), reflecting the ultimate Polish victory in the Russo-Polish War, provided Poland with almost 52,000 square mile of land east of the Curzon Line. Although the Curzon Line, which had never been proposed as a permanent boundary, lost significance after the Russo-Polish War, the Soviet Union later revived it, claiming all the territory east of the line and occupying that area (in accordance with the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939) at the outbreak of World War II. Encyclopedia Britannica, “Curzon Line,” Encyclopedia Britannica inc., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/147270/Curzon-Line> (accessed 1 February 2013).

<sup>35</sup>Graebner, *America and the Cold War*, 63.

<sup>36</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 216.

<sup>37</sup>Anne Lane and Howard Temperley, *The Rise and the Fall of the Great Alliance 1941-1945* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 226.

not contest the burgeoning Soviet control of Eastern Europe. Amongst other U.S. participants, Stettinius, Hopkins, and Byrnes were members of the delegations. The results of the Yalta conference and their formation would significantly influence their later advice to Truman.

### Description of the Strategic Environment

The strategic environment Truman faced was a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affected the employment of U.S. capabilities to bear on the decisions of the U.S. government. Truman had to assess Churchill's and Stalin's intentions, the end states they wanted to achieve, and their center of gravities to better identify the actual problems he had to solve, to anticipate potential outcomes, and to understand the results of their actions.<sup>38</sup> All this served the purpose to understand how these actions would affect the U.S. to achieve its end state which will be discussed at the end of this sub-section. Complicating the situation for Truman in the first four months of his Presidency, his initial assessment of the strategic environment was sometimes overtaken by events, requiring numerous iterations of strategic reassessment.

### Churchill' Strategic Approach

The first description of Churchill's potential end states were provided by the report the State Department had prepared on 13 April 1945.<sup>39</sup> This assessment said that the policy of Great Britain was fundamentally based upon cooperation with the U.S. Churchill wanted generally to maintain the unity of the three great powers, but he had increasing apprehension of the Soviet Union and her intentions. He shared the U.S. interpretation of the Yalta Agreement on Eastern

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<sup>38</sup>Joint Publication 5-0, III, 8-10.

<sup>39</sup>State Department—Special information for the president, Harry S. Truman Papers, Naval Aide to the President Files, Box 21, HSTL.

Europe and liberated areas. Churchill, according to the U.S. State Department assessment, was pressing their implementation with unnecessary rigidity. Aware of Great Britain's decline, Churchill was anxious to buttress his position vis-à-vis the U.S. and the Soviet Union both through exerting British leadership over the countries in Western Europe and through knitting the Commonwealth more closely together.<sup>40</sup> Re-establishing Great Britain's influence became the end state of Churchill's strategy. As Weinberg described it, Churchill was "devoted to the great past of the British Empire and its capital."<sup>41</sup> His main adversary to achieve this aim was the Soviet Union.

Churchill consistently promoted a hard line policy against the Soviet Union in the last year of the war. He felt deep anxiety because of Stalin's "misrepresentation of the Yalta decisions," his attitude towards Poland, the way Stalin applied power in the territories under his control, and Stalin's desire to maintain very large armies in the field for a long time. Churchill was concerned what would happen, when the British and U.S. armies had been "melted away," when the U.S. and the British might have a handful of divisions while the Soviets might choose to "keep two or three hundred on active service."<sup>42</sup> One should furthermore not forget that Great Britain had initially gone to war in 1939. Therefore, it was paramount that the course of action decided upon in Yalta on liberated Eastern Europe—especially on Poland—needed to be translated in action by the Soviet Union. If necessary, any possible pressure on Stalin should now be applied. Churchill wanted to use any pledge he had. The Anglo-American forces had stopped their approach to Berlin at the river Elbe, which left them deep within the occupation zone which

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<sup>40</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 14-15.

<sup>41</sup>Gerhard Weinberg, *Visions of Victory—The Hopes of Eight World War II Leaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 159.

<sup>42</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1978), 971.

Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin had previously assigned to the Soviet Union at Yalta. On 18 April 1945, Churchill sent a telegram suggesting to Truman that those troops should not be withdrawn from their advanced position until certain concessions had been made by the Soviets. On 11 May 1945, after the German capitulation, Churchill escalated his argument. He told Truman that, premature British and U.S. withdrawal would mean “the tide of Russian domination sweeping forward 120 miles on a front of 300 to 400 miles....an event which, if it occurred, would be one of the most melancholy in history.”<sup>43</sup> The Anglo-Americans should not move their forces “until satisfied about Russian politics in Poland, Germany, and the Danube basin.” One day later he used the term “Iron Curtain” for the first time to describe the division of Europe between the Soviet Union and the West.<sup>44</sup> Truman believed that the best way to handle the Soviet Union was to “stick carefully to our agreements and to try our best to make the Soviet Union carry out their agreements.”<sup>45</sup>

From 25 May to 3 June 1945 Truman sent Davies, who was sympathetic to the Soviet Union, on his mission to London to prepare Churchill for the Potsdam Conference. Davies submitted to Churchill that Truman was gravely concerned over the serious deterioration in the

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<sup>43</sup>Gaddis, 208.

<sup>44</sup>The term *Iron Curtain* is closely connected to Churchill who was one of the first using it to symbolize the ideological conflict and physical boundary dividing Europe into two separate areas after the Potsdam conference. On either side of the *Iron Curtain*, states would develop their own international economic and military alliances. The first recorded occasion on which Churchill used the term *iron curtain* was in a telegram he sent on 12 May 1945 telegram to Truman regarding his concern about Soviet actions, stating “an iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. Great Britain and the U.S. did not know what was going on behind.” Really famous became the term on 5 March 1946 when Churchill— invited by Truman—gave a speech in the small Missouri town of Fulton. Churchill gave his now famous “Iron Curtain” speech to a crowd of 40,000. In this speech, Churchill gave the very descriptive phrase that surprised the United States and Britain, “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.” Encyclopedia Britannica, “Iron Curtain,” Encyclopedia Britannica inc., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/294419/Iron-Curtain> (accessed 1 February 2013).

<sup>45</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 210.



relations of the Soviets with both Great Britain and the U.S.<sup>46</sup> When Davies provided his debriefing on 4 June 1945, to Truman, Leahy, and Byrnes, he stated that Churchill had been fearful of what would happen when the American troops would withdraw from Europe. It would “leave Europe prostrate and at the mercy of the Red Army.” Furthermore, he confirmed again the assessment that Churchill was “resisting gallantly and vigorously the unpleasant fact that the British government no longer occupied its former degree of power and dominance in the world, and that he saw in the presence of the American Army in Europe a hope of sustaining Great Britain’s vanishing position in Europe.” However, Churchill clearly made the point that he would not oppose any U.S. actions towards the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup>

In order to regain Great Britain strength, the economic recovery of Great Britain became paramount for Churchill. The continuation of the Lend-Lease agreement would become important to achieve this objective. Generally, Churchill wanted to stand up to the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Despite his lip service, the unity of the Big Three was endangered. It became clear that Truman and Churchill stood apart in their approach to the Soviet Union before the Potsdam Conference. Hence, there was little possibility of “ganging-up” by conducting a solely Anglo-American meeting prior to the Potsdam Conference. Truman shared something of Roosevelt’s suspicions of Britain’s desire to protect its imperial interests.<sup>48</sup> Truman’s refusal to endorse Churchill’s strategy on the troop withdrawal emphatically marked the “American policy of marching to the beat of a quite different drummer than the British in dealing with the Soviet-Union.”<sup>49</sup> Churchill wrote in his memoirs that he had no choice but to submit. He thought that

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<sup>46</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 149.

<sup>47</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 379-80.

<sup>48</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 153.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 167.

Truman had to rely totally in his actions on his military and civilian advisors. Truman's responsibility was "at this point limited to deciding whether circumstances had changed so fundamentally that an entirely different procedure should be adopted with the likelihood of having to face accusations of breach of face."<sup>50</sup>

Churchill's end state was the re-establishment of Great Britain's pre-World War II greatness. His objectives were taking the leadership of Western Europe and containing the Soviet Union as far east as possible. The ways to achieve this end state and objectives were the creation of a British sphere of influence in Western Europe, the creation of a democratic Poland as a buffer to the Soviet Union, and the quick recovery of the British economy. The means to accomplish this sequence of actions had to be provided by the U.S. by maintaining a strong force in Europe and by continuing the Lend-Lease support to Great Britain. The center of gravity for Churchill, defined as "the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act," was the continuation of the partnership with the U.S. and the unity of effort with the U.S. policy.<sup>51</sup>

### Stalin's Strategic Approach

The starting point for Truman's assessment of the Soviet strategy came from Ambassador Harriman who provided a first-hand assessment. In a lengthy cable one week before Roosevelt's death he described the three basic objectives of the Soviet Union's strategy. First, the Soviet Union intended to cooperate with the U.S. and Great Britain in the soon newly created world security organization—the United Nations. Secondly, she wanted to create a "unilateral security ring" at her western border through domination of the countries located there. Thirdly, she

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<sup>50</sup>Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 977.

<sup>51</sup>Joint Publication 5-0, GL-6.

intended to penetrate other countries by Communist controlled parties in order to create a political atmosphere favorable to Soviet communist politics. A strategy like this foiled the U.S. hopes that the success of the United Nations would convince the Soviet Union that she did not need a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.<sup>52</sup>

And the Soviets followed consequently their strategy. Vojtech Mastny provides a good description of what had happened between the Yalta conference and Roosevelt's death by stating that "within six weeks of Yalta, its substance was weighed and found wanting."<sup>53</sup> The Soviet's High Command altered its plan of operations in order to gain as much territory to the west as possible. Stalin installed a totally "subservient" communist regime in Romania. Concerning Poland he was only negotiating with the Soviet-friendly Lublin Poles. Stalin refused to invite Polish representatives from the government-in exile in London and arrested sixteen remaining leaders of the Polish Home Army, which had fought so brave against the German Army in the Warsaw uprising.<sup>54</sup> On 12 March, Harriman informed Molotov that Anglo-American

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<sup>52</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 201.

<sup>53</sup>Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 253.

<sup>54</sup>The Red Army Offensive in the spring of 1944 reached Warsaw by the late summer. Poland had suffered for five years under Nazi occupation, and the Government-in-Exile in London kept the focus of the Polish cause. In addition to the Polish airborne and regular units serving with the Allied armies in the west, a sizable irregular force was organizing in Warsaw. The Polish Home Army, loyal to the London Poles, stocked weapons and supplies throughout the spring of 1944. Another group of Poles, Communists who were directly controlled by Stalin, set up another government-in-exile in Moscow. They controlled a much smaller network in Warsaw and other Polish cities. In late July 1944 the Soviets reached the outskirts of Warsaw. The London Polish Government-in-Exile sent orders to the Polish Home Army that they would liberate the Polish capital themselves, sending a message that Poland would not be indebted to or under the influence of the Soviet Union. On 31 July, the Russians reached the suburb of Praga. Polish Home Army General Tadeusz Komorowski, called General Bor, ordered the Home Army to attack the German garrison. On 1 August 1944, the Home Army rose up, attacking the German garrison. Stalin saw the uprising as an opportunity and halted the Red Army just outside Warsaw. For sixty-six days, under the direction of London, the Home Army fought the Germans in similar conditions that the Warsaw Ghetto resistance did. By October 1944, German artillery and aircraft

representatives had made contact in Berne with the German general Vietinghoff-Scheel who was in charge of the German forces in Italy and had been examining his offer to surrender. The Soviets were not invited to participate in these talks. According to Mastny, Stalin was concerned about a possible Anglo-American-German rapprochement. Stettinius and Harriman speculated that Stalin, after his return from Yalta, had been criticized by the Politburo for having made too many concessions. Mastny describes it as following in the surprising swing “from ostensible harmony to hostile competition, within a mere six weeks, the ambiguous results of the Yalta summit had set the stage.”<sup>55</sup>

Stettinius first assessment provided to Truman on 13 April 1945 stated, “that since the Yalta agreement the Soviet Union has taken a firm and uncompromising position on nearly every major question that had arisen in the U.S.-Soviet relations. This included the Polish question, the application of the Crimea agreement on liberated areas in Eastern Europe, and the planned United Nations conference in San Francisco. In the liberated areas Soviet-controlled and Soviet-friendly governments were established on a unilateral basis which was not in line with the Yalta agreements. The Soviet Union asked for a large postwar credit and had been unwilling to orderly liquidate the Lend-Lease aid. Stettinius informed Truman that Stalin “appears to desire to proceed with the San Francisco conference, but was initially unwilling to send his Foreign minister

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were systematically destroying the whole of Warsaw and the Polish Home Army ceased to exist. 55,000 Poles were dead. The London Government-in-Exile and the British were outraged at Stalin sitting outside Warsaw while the defenders died and the city burned. Stalin, already thinking about the postwar world, clearly wanted the Western Polish network destroyed and let the Germans do it for him. The Germans held the city until January 1945. By that time, only 153,000 Warsaw citizens remained out of 1,289,000 before September 1939. The Polish Home Army Uprising was the first of the cracks in the Soviet-Anglo-American alliance that would lead to the Cold War. World War II Multimedia Database, “The Polish Home Army Uprising August 1, 1944 - January 1945,” <http://www.worldwar2database.com/html/warsaw.htm/page/0/1> (accessed 3 March 2013).

<sup>55</sup>Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, 253-266.

Molotov.”<sup>56</sup> Harriman finally convinced Stalin to send Molotov. Molotov agreed to stop in Washington on his way to the United Nations conference in San Francisco in order to meet Truman on 23 April 1945.

Most of Truman’s advisors argued for a revision of the U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union. Harriman, the hawk, immediately recommended to Truman to reconsider the U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union. Harriman argued, that “the Russians would not react violently to a firmer American policy, because they still needed the support from the U.S. to rebuild her war-shattered economy.” Furthermore, Harriman stated that the foreign policy of a Soviet occupied country would be totally controlled by the Soviets by the institution of secret police rule and extinction of freedom of speech. Soviet actions in Poland were part of an overall plan to take over Eastern Europe.<sup>57</sup>

On 23 April 1945 the meeting between Truman and Molotov took place and clarified the Soviet objectives. As far as the Polish problem was concerned, the Soviet approach will be discussed later in a sub-section. Leahy, as a participant in the meeting, stated that Truman’s “strong American stand at this meeting, expressed in language that was not all diplomatic,” left to the Soviet Union only two courses of action: either to approach closely to the U.S. expressed policy in regard to Poland or to drop out of the United Nations. Leahy did not believe they would take the latter course. Truman’s attitude in dealing with Molotov would have a beneficial effect on the Soviet outlook on the rest the world. They had always known that the U.S. had power, and they should know after this conversation that the U.S. had the determination to insist upon the declared right of all people to choose their own form of government.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 15.

<sup>57</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 202.

<sup>58</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 352.

Another field which occupied Stalin's attention was the reconstruction of the suffering Soviet economy, but he found resistance from the U.S. side. In Yalta, Roosevelt had taken a firm stand on reparations from Germany indicating that the U.S. would not support the indiscriminate removal of German industrial equipment to rebuild the Soviet economy and accepting only with greatest reluctance the Soviet figure of \$20 billion as "a basis of negotiations."<sup>59</sup> Stalin was trying to "bleed Germany white by wholesale removal of her wealth...At the same time Stalin needed an undivided Germany in order to collect the maximum amount of reparations with the help or connivance of the other occupation powers."<sup>60</sup> Stalin required these substantial reparations in order to rebuild the Soviet Union, "which had been so terribly ravaged by the fighting and the scorched-earth policies on both sides." Stalin was prepared to make some concessions on other issues to gain industrial facilities and other forms of reparations from all zones of occupation, including those of the Western powers.<sup>61</sup> Besides the question about reparations the U.S. had another mighty instrument at hand which is discussed in a following section. U.S. material shipped under the Lend-Lease agreement had become a very important life line for the Soviets to maintain the war against Germany. The Soviets had a huge interest in continuing this program.

Concerning Japan, Stalin, who was still not at war with Japan in spring 1945, was eager to fulfill the Yalta agreement which called for a Soviet entry to war shortly after the German capitulation. Soviet military preparations in the Far East became more and more obvious. Stalin wanted to have his share of the prize. When Hopkins was sent on his mission to prepare the Potsdam Conference, the Soviet position on the Far East became clearer. Stalin was supporting the idea of the unconditional surrender of Japan and "would reclaim much of what Czar Nicholas

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<sup>59</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 215.

<sup>60</sup>Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, 295.

<sup>61</sup>Weinberg, *Visions of Victory*, 124.

II lost in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. The U.S., under both Roosevelt and Truman, accepted this reality.”<sup>62</sup> Hopkins’s discussions with Stalin on the question of Poland are discussed in one of the next subsections.

Stalin had developed additional territorial ambitions which provided a significant insight into the sort of postwar world he would have preferred to see. He had expansionist hopes in Turkey, Iran, and Japan. He expected Turkey to permit Soviet bases on the Bosphorus. Following upon the joint British-Soviet occupation of Iran in August 1942, Stalin entertained hopes of annexing the northwestern part of that country. These demands for additional territory and bases indicated a further expansion of Soviet influence in two directions. He wanted to control the direct route in the Mediterranean Sea and he wanted to increase the Soviet’s role in the Middle East.<sup>63</sup> In the memorandum Davies wrote for Truman, the Soviets were threatening the world peace for four reasons, first they were full of “classic suspicion and distrust,” secondly Stalin had developed “Soviet Napoleon dreams of empire and conquest,” thirdly “clashes of interest due to British interests in regions vital to Soviet security” was looming, and finally there was a deep Soviet “suspicion of a hostile working coalition” between the U.S. and Great Britain.<sup>64</sup> These four aspects influenced Stalin’s strategy.

Soviet gains in battle contributed to Stalin’s hardened attitude. A. H. Birse, Churchill’s interpreter, described it as following: “Of necessity he was more forthcoming during the war, less rigid and more ready to put aside his anti-western orientation for a time...although this desirable and agreeable attitude was subject to strict limitations.” For Birse, Stalin “never lost sight of the

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<sup>62</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 155-56.

<sup>63</sup>Weinberg, *Visions of Victory*, 121.

<sup>64</sup>Memorandum from Davies to Truman on 3 July 1945, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency* vol. 2, *Planning for the Postwar World: President Truman at the Potsdam Conference*, 17 July -2 August 1945, 153-169.

chief aim of communism, the overthrow of capitalism. We (the west) were still the ultimate enemy.”<sup>65</sup> One should not forget that Stalin had a great advantage. His leadership of the Soviet Union in the World War II had ended in a spectacular victory, great territorial gains, and an internationally recognized “great power status for the country.”<sup>66</sup>

Stalin’s end state was that the U.S. recognize the Soviet right to control large parts of Eastern Europe and establish a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. These Soviet satellite states would serve as a strategic buffer against the West that could also be exploited economically for the rapid rebuilding of the devastated Soviet economy. The ways to achieve this end state were the creation of a unilateral security ring at the Soviet western border through decisive control of the neighboring countries. Furthermore the Soviet Union had to enter the war against Japan and assume a role in the newly created United Nations. But Stalin still had to maintain his partnership with the U.S. because he needed them to continue the Lend-Lease program and to provide the Soviet Union any other kind of post-war credits. The means to achieve these actions were the overwhelming Soviet armed forces spread over Eastern Europe and Stalin’s preparations for an engagement in the Far East. Financially the resources for the economic recovery needed to come from the U.S. or needed to be seized as reparation from Germany.

#### The U.S. End State

Following the design methodology in understanding the operational environment and given the goals of the Soviet and British strategy, Truman faced the challenge of articulating a U.S. end state. Primarily, Truman wanted to defeat Japan, to end the war, and to restore order in Europe as soon as possible. To defeat Japan, he wanted to maintain the coalition of the Big Three

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<sup>65</sup>A. H. Birse, *Memoirs of an Interpreter—Behind the Scenes with Churchill’s Interpreter at the Big Three conferences* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc, 1967), 211.

<sup>66</sup>Weinberg, *Visions of Victory*, 133.



after Germany had capitulated. China and Korea needed to be liberated. Finally, all Allied forces should be withdrawn from Iran when not required anymore for the continuation of the war with Japan. With this end state, Truman was in line with Roosevelt's strategy in April 1945.

To restore order in Europe, peace had to be negotiated and territorial claims needed to be settled. Measures were required that an undivided Germany would never again threaten her neighbors or peace in the world. The Yalta agreement should be put into action, hence ideally more or less free elections should be held in the freed Eastern European states. Spheres of influence in Europe needed to be avoided and U.S. influence in European affairs needed to be strengthened. Truman also had to plan for a postwar world from an economic point of view. His primary concern was to prevent a repeat of the Great Depression. American officials held that another economic downturn could only be avoided if global markets and raw materials were fully open to all peoples—especially for the U.S.—on the basis of equal opportunity. Europe and especially Germany, as potential motor for the reconstruction, needed to recover.

Peace in the world would be ensured in the future by the United Nations. Truman “attached the greatest importance to the establishment of international machinery for the prevention of war and the maintenance of peace.”<sup>67</sup>

### Defining the Problem Truman Faced

Following the design methodology, “defining the problem is essential to solving the problem. It involves understanding and isolating the root causes of the issue at hand—defining the essence of a complex, ill defined problem.” According to the Joint Publication 5.0 “the problem statement identifies the areas for action that will transform existing conditions towards

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<sup>67</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 271.

the desired end state.”<sup>68</sup> To define the tensions between the current conditions in Europe and Japan and the desired U.S. end state as described in last subsection, four sub-problems have to be examined in more detail: How should the U.S. end the war against Japan? How should the U.S. deal with the Poland problem as a blue print for all Eastern Europe states? How should the U.S. deal with Germany? And finally, how could the free access to global markets be achieved?

Before dealing with those four sub-problems it is necessary to understand Truman’s hope for the United Nations Organization. The United Nations were created as a world organization to guarantee world peace in the future. The key events in this context had taken place before the start of the Potsdam Conference. The UN conference was held in San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. This meeting, for which many Americans held such high hopes, had the ironic effect of aggravating rather than alleviating international tensions, for it revealed to the public the full extent of the differences between the Soviet Union and the West.<sup>69</sup>

The Soviets insisted on a veto power by the great powers on all matters. The U.S. and Great Britain had come to the conclusion that the Soviet participation in the United Nations was so important that they were prepared to give in on this issue.<sup>70</sup> Truman himself, before departing for Potsdam, had played his part in bringing to fruition the endeavors involved in creating the United Nations Organization. Following Hopkins intervention with Stalin, the major powers—the future permanent members of the Security Council—closed ranks on the matter of the council’s procedures and moved the conference to a conclusion. In a concession to the smaller countries, the British and the Americans accepted their proposal that any matter might be discussed in the General Assembly. On 26 June 1945 Truman watched proudly as Stettinius signed the United

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<sup>68</sup>Joint Publication 5-0, III-12.

<sup>69</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 224.

<sup>70</sup>Weinberg, *Visions of Victory*, 126.

Nations Charter for the United States. Truman personally delivered the Charter of the United Nations to the Senate of the United States.<sup>71</sup> The question of Soviet participation in the United Nations was no longer a topic when the Potsdam Conference started. A new world body was created which theoretically could take care of the problems of the world in the future.

### Peace Negotiations and Territorial Settlements

The existing conditions in Europe at the end of the war were confusion, political uncertainties, and economic dislocation verging on chaos. The objective was a negotiated peace including all territorial settlements. According to the perceived lessons learned from the Versailles Peace Conference following World War I, Byrnes and the State Department did not believe that a full, formal peace conference was the procedure best suited to obtain the best results. The threat to achieve the objective was that “such a formal peace conference would be necessarily slow and unwieldy, its sessions would be conducted in an atmosphere of rival claims and counter-claims and ratification of the resulting documents might be long delayed.” The opportunity was to limit the participants of such a peace conference to the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations: Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, France, and the U.S. A state not represented in this group could be invited to join the group in case a question of direct interest for this particular state would be considered.<sup>72</sup> Territorial settlements concerned primarily Germany and Poland, but also the former Italian colonies.

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<sup>71</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 169-70.

<sup>72</sup>Department of State, *Conference of Berlin* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 1966.

## How to End the War with Japan?

According to Truman's assessment shortly before the Potsdam Conference, the war in the Pacific had been hard and costly in the years since the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. The U.S. had fought their way back to the Philippines and the last island chain before the Japanese homeland. Okinawa and Iwo Jima had been defended fiercely by the Japanese Armed Forces and the U.S. loss of lives had been very heavy. There were still more than four million Japanese soldiers ready to defend the main Japanese islands, Korea, Manchuria, and North China.<sup>73</sup>

Early in May 1945, Harriman had raised the need for a reevaluation of American political objectives in the Far East. Harriman pondered whether the Soviet Union should really join the fight against Japan as it was decided upon in Yalta. Hence, the State Department asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to study this question.<sup>74</sup> On 16 May 1945, Stimson had outlined for Truman the strategy developed by the military planners. The campaign against Japan had been based on the assumption that the U.S. would not attempt to engage the mass of the Japanese Army in China with U.S. ground forces (fear of losses). The plan had called for an invasion of the Japanese homeland.<sup>75</sup>

On 16 June 1945 Truman reviewed the plans for the invasion of Japan with his military advisors. The Joint Chiefs of Staff stressed the advantage of Soviet participation as a means of containing Japanese troops in Manchuria and possibly shortening the war. Nevertheless the military laid out that the Soviets had the capacity to delay their entry into the Pacific War until the U.S. had done all the dirty work. Nonetheless, Truman demonstrated a similar reluctance to revise

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<sup>73</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 314.

<sup>74</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 211.

<sup>75</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 236.

Roosevelt's military policies in the Far East as he had shown in most of the topics concerning Europe.

An additional unknown factor which made it difficult to evaluate the need for Soviet support in the Far East was the atomic bomb. Stimson argued that the U.S. should not bring up the point before the bomb was ready. The State Department wanted to have a clear statement on the conditions for the Soviet entry before the Potsdam Conference. When Hopkins went on his mission to Moscow, Stalin ensured him that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan on 8 August 1945. During the meeting on 16 June 1945 the Joint Chiefs outlined again the advantage of a Soviet participation as a means of containing Japanese forces in Manchuria and possibly shortening the war. The impact of Soviet's entry on the already hopeless Japanese may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation.<sup>76</sup>

This led to a second tension which laid between the current ongoing war with Japan and the desired end state—Japan's capitulation. In the conferences of the Grand Alliance prior to the Potsdam Conference it was never really agreed upon to demand an unconditional surrender of Japan. The principal of unconditional surrender had only been applied to Europe. Leahy had the opinion—and advised Truman accordingly—that surrender could be arranged with “terms acceptable to Japan that would make fully satisfactory provisions for America's defense against any future trans-Pacific aggression.”<sup>77</sup> The call for unconditional surrender would delay the Japanese government from surrendering, but Byrnes and the State Department insisted on the terms of the unconditional surrender. The opportunity seen by the State Department was to outline the program for the treatment of the defeated Japan in the hope that Japan would accept

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<sup>76</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 210.

<sup>77</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 384-85.

the unconditional surrender.<sup>78</sup> Two other problems are linked to the Japanese: how to deal with a liberated China and Korea and how to withdraw the Allied forces from Iran when Iran was no longer required as logistic basis for the war with Japan.

To achieve the desired end state—the Japanese capitulation—it was necessary to make the terms of surrender somehow attractive to the Japanese government, while at the same time the Soviet Union needed to be taken aboard in order to shorten the war.

#### How to Deal with the Poland Problem and the other Eastern Europe States Who Were Occupied by the Soviet Union?

Poland had been the reason for which Great Britain had gone to war in 1939; hence the British government had a certain obligation to Poland. At Yalta, the status of Poland had been discussed and the three Great Powers had agreed to reorganize the existing communist provisional government on a broader democratic basis. After the Yalta conference this agreement for reorganization was more or less ignored by the Stalin. Leaders of the Polish wartime resistance were even jailed, some executed, and the Soviets refused to expand the Provisional Polish government with members of the Polish government-in-exile in London. The U.S. and Great Britain were troubled by these developments.

To understand the tensions between the U.S. end state of having a free elected government in Poland, the existing conditions need to be examined in more detail. On 16 April, Harriman met Stalin, who proposed to apply the Yugoslav formula for Poland too. Harriman rejected the proffered model in which the fervent Marxist Josip Tito had established firm control of the Yugoslav government and tolerated within it but a few members of the former Yugoslav

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<sup>78</sup>Department of State, *The Berlin conference —Agenda proposed by the Department of State*, Truman Library, Berlin conference file, 1945, Box 1, Volume I, Doc 3.

government in exile. This was not what the U.S. had in mind.<sup>79</sup> It became clear that the U.S. and the Soviet interpretation of the Yalta agreement did not match. On 20 April 1945, in preparation of the Molotov visit, Harriman reinforced Truman's intention to be firm with Molotov by confirming—inaccurately—that this has been always Roosevelt's intent too. Truman was prepared to tell Molotov that a failure to reach an agreement on the Polish question in the near future would jeopardize the conference in San Francisco.<sup>80</sup> On 21 April 1945 the Soviet Government signed a treaty with the Provisional Polish Government, without involving Great Britain, the U.S., or the Polish government in exile in London. On 22 April 1945 Truman met Molotov. He had planned to greet Molotov warmly and then to encourage him firmly to hold to the existing agreements. The Polish matter was to be presented as the “symbol for the future development of U.S.-Soviet Union international relationship.”<sup>81</sup> Present at this meeting were Truman, Molotov, Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko, Stettinius, Harriman, and Leahy. Leahy reports in his memoirs that Truman said that a failure to agree to the Polish problem would offend the American people and might adversely affect or prevent postwar collaboration that would be so advantageous to both nations and to the world.<sup>82</sup> The Soviet Union's actions towards Poland did not reflect the Yalta Agreements. The outcome of the meeting is described at the beginning of this section.

The Polish question had become a symbol of the deterioration of the U.S. relations with the Soviet Union. Hence Truman decided on 14 May 1945 to seek a meeting of the Big Three. The idea of the Potsdam Conference was born. As a preliminary step, he cabled Stalin on 20 May

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<sup>79</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 106.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>81</sup>Harry S. Truman, *Truman Papers: President's Secretary Files*, Box 187, HSTL.

<sup>82</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 351.

1945 that he was sending Harry Hopkins to Moscow to discuss with him some of the questions that seemed to be causing misunderstanding and poor understanding.<sup>83</sup> Truman briefed Hopkins prior to his departure about his aims. Truman was “anxious to have a fair understanding with the Russian government.” This should be grounded in carrying out their existing commitments and agreements, although, indicative of Davies’s influence, Truman seemed willing to accept some sort of face-saving arrangements rather than to hold out for genuinely democratic settlement.<sup>84</sup> On 15 June 1945, representatives from the various Polish camps arrived in Moscow, and reached an agreement among them. Ambassador Harriman made clear that the Americans would consider any new government as “provisional” until it held free and unfettered elections in Poland as provided for in the original Yalta agreement. On 22 June 1945 an agreement has been reached in Moscow to establish a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. Six days later, on 28 June 1945 the composition of the new government was announced. The Polish government in exile—the London Poles—received seemingly precious but essentially powerless positions, while the former communist Provisional Government—the Lublin Poles—held tight control of the real levers of power. In the end, Hopkins acceded to the Soviet formula that the Lublin government “be enlarged by a token representation of the London Poles. The subsequent unfettered elections of a permanent government were left in abeyance.”<sup>85</sup> On 5 July 1945 Truman formally recognized the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, but its status was provisional as long as no free elections would have been conducted.<sup>86</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff saw a further opportunity to increase the pressure on the Soviets to allow free elections in Poland. They advised

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 369.

<sup>84</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 145.

<sup>85</sup>Mastny, *Russia’s Road to the Cold War*, 286-287.

<sup>86</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 164.



Truman not to approve a further extension of the Polish border to the west as long as the political orientation of Poland could not be clearly foreseen.<sup>87</sup>

Truman's problem statement for the Polish problem could be summarized as follows: to achieve his end state, which was the restoration of a free Poland, he had to transform the existing conditions, which was a Poland under full control of the Soviets and their proxies—the Lublin Poles. The tensions were that the London Poles were not allowed in country by the Soviets as long as the Lublin Poles were not recognized by the U.S. This deadlock could be broken by Hopkins mission to Moscow. Opportunities for U.S. policy were based on the prospect of an improved political situation if elections were held in Poland. Davies and Hopkins encouraged Truman to hope for this outcome.<sup>88</sup> Further U.S. opportunities were to link the final decision on the new western Polish border with the execution of free elections.

#### How to Deal with the Defeated Germany

How to deal with the defeated Germany was the major topic during the Potsdam Conference. The terms for a final peace agreement needed to be negotiated. The U.S. end state for Germany was that Germany would never again be capable of threatening her neighbors or the peace of the world. At the same time the German people should be given the opportunity to prepare for eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis.<sup>89</sup> To understand what the U.S. thoughts on how to deal with Germany were, it is necessary to study in more detail the existing plans. The principle features of the U.S. policy as outlined by the State Department and approved by Truman's predecessor Roosevelt on 23 March 1945 were: "the

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<sup>87</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, "The Berlin Conference—Comments and Recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Berlin Conference file, 1945, Volume V, Tab 4, Box 2, HSTL.

<sup>88</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 164.

<sup>89</sup>Department of State, *The Berlin Conference*, Doc 2.

destruction of National Socialists organizations and influence. Punishment of war criminals, disbandment of the German military establishment, military government administered with a view to political decentralization, reparation from existing wealth and future production, prevention of the manufacture of arms and destruction of all specialized facilities for their production, and controls over the German economy to secure these objectives.”<sup>90</sup> The Morgenthau plan, a plan to translate these principles into action had been developed before Truman became president.

### Morgenthau Plan

The Morgenthau Plan had been proposed by United States Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and had been endorsed by Roosevelt in late summer 1944. The plan advocated that the Allied occupation of Germany following World War II include measures to eliminate Germany's ability to wage war in future. To achieve this goal Morgenthau developed a three-step plan. Germany was to be partitioned into two independent states. Germany's main centers of mining and industry, including the Saar area, the Ruhr area, and Upper Silesia were to be internationalized or annexed by neighboring nations. All heavy industry was to be dismantled or otherwise destroyed. By eliminating the industrial potential of Germany, Germany would become a strictly pastoral and agricultural community.<sup>91</sup>

On 16 September 1944, Roosevelt and Morgenthau had persuaded the initially very reluctant British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, to agree to the plan. Immediately after Truman became president the opponents of the Morgenthau plan raised their voice. Stimson advised Truman in a letter dated 16 May 1945 that “eighty million Germans and Austrians in

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<sup>90</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 16.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 327.

Central Europe necessarily swing the balance of the European continent.” Furthermore he stated and he was in line with the State Department that “crippling the German industry and therefore food production would penalize the other Europeans who had been Hitler’s victims.” To avoid this effect, Stimson promoted an industrialized Germany.<sup>92</sup> Truman did not think much about the Morgenthau plan. When Morgenthau insisted on accompanying Truman to Potsdam by threatening to quit if he was not allowed to, Truman accepted his resignation immediately. The Morgenthau plan was dead. Truman was convinced that it was necessary to rebuild Germany’s industries as a future motor for Europe’s recovery. This German recovery could only occur when the industrial basis was not destroyed. Stalin’s wish for excessive reparations would be additionally counterproductive to this aim.

### Reparations

The current conditions concerning reparations were that Roosevelt had agreed in Yalta to the number of \$20 billion to be taken out of Germany by the Soviet Union as the basis for further negotiations. The Soviets had immediately started to dismantle the German industries in their occupation zone. The tension between the current status and an economical recovery of Germany was that the industrial basis of Germany might be so damaged, that recovery would be seriously impeded. On 26 April 1945, Stimson’s War Department came up with the assessment, that there was an imperative need in Germany for food, fuel, and transportation. The destruction of cities, towns, and facilities had been immense, the vast number of displaced persons formed an enormous problem and the dissolution of society and facilities was shocking. In his memoirs Truman assessed the situation as follows: “there is complete economic, social, and political collapse going on in Europe, the extent of which is unparalleled in history unless one goes back to

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<sup>92</sup>Henry L. Stimson, *Stimson Diaries* (New Haven: Yale University Library), Reel 9, 971.

the Roman Empire.”<sup>93</sup> This summarized quite drastically the threats to achieve the envisaged U.S. objectives. Exorbitant requests from Stalin would even deteriorate the described situation. Truman placed primary emphasis on the need to maintain the German economy intact even if this meant restricting reparations shipment to the Soviet Union. In a directive to a group of U.S. diplomats arriving in Moscow to begin negotiations on the economic arrangements for Germany, Truman had given the following clear guidance, “while removals from existing facilities would inevitably lower the German standard of living, they should be held in such limits as to leave German people with sufficient means to provide a minimum subsistence...without sustained outside relief. Remaining industrial production would be used first to provide for the basic needs of the German people and to pay for essential imports, and only then for reparations.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore a new threat became obvious. There was a need to limit U.S. future costs. The U.S. government “opposed any reparation plan based upon the assumption that the U.S. or any other country would finance directly or indirectly any reconstruction in Germany or reparation by Germany.”<sup>95</sup> The objective to maintain the German economy intact and hence to limit reparations request at a reasonable level became one of the main drivers of the U.S. strategy in Potsdam.

#### How to Build a Functioning Allied Administration for Germany

In line with the principal features of Roosevelt’s policy to achieve the end state of a Germany not capable to start war again, Truman desired the following objectives to be achieved: the complete disarmament of Germany and the control of all German industry that could be used for military production; the destruction of the National Socialist Party; and the reconstruction of

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<sup>93</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 102.

<sup>94</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 222.

<sup>95</sup>Miscamble quotes from a report from the Interdepartmental Informal Policy Committee on Germany, released on 18 May. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 132.

the German political life on a democratic basis. Threats to achieve these objectives were the former Nazi leaders and members of the Nazi party, the centralized organization of the former German administration and Soviet demands for reparations. Opportunities to achieve this end state were to change the mindset of the German people by convincing them that they had suffered a total military defeat and that they could not escape their responsibilities. This change of mindset could be fostered by adjusting the German education and by establishing a German administration as soon as possible. In the agenda for the Potsdam Conference the State Department stated on 30 June 1945 that “the administration of affairs in Germany should be directed towards the decentralization of the political structure and the development of local responsibility.”<sup>96</sup> The main tension between the current condition and the envisaged end state was that the Allied Control Council, established on 5 June 1945 had not yet started its work to develop any plans since the Soviets—according to the State Department—had insisted that the “Control Council could not function until the withdrawal of all forces to their respective zones would have been conducted. As the result of a telegraphic exchange between Truman, Stalin, and Churchill, 1 July 1945 had been fixed as the tentative date for the withdrawal into the zones.”<sup>97</sup>

#### How to Deal with the Economic Support for Great Britain and the Soviet Union?

As already outlined in the description of Churchill’s and Stalin’s strategy, the Lend-Lease program and further large U.S. postwar loans played an important role in their thoughts on how to rebuild their own economies after the war. The Lend-Lease program had been a decisive step away from non-interventionist policy, which had dominated United States foreign relations since the end of World War I, towards international involvement. On 11 May 1945, Truman signed an

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<sup>96</sup>Department of State, *The Berlin Conference*, Doc 2.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

order to cut back Lend-Lease supplies when Germany surrendered. The manner in which the order was executed was unfortunate. One could say an embargo on all shipments to the Soviet Union and to Great Britain was enforced even to the extent of having some of the ships turned around and brought back to American ports for unloading. The British were hardest hit, but the Soviets interpreted the move as especially aimed at them.<sup>98</sup> Truman made it clear that the Lend-Lease Act did not authorize aid for purposes of postwar relief, postwar rehabilitation, or postwar reconstruction. Great Britain and the Soviet Union would only get any further Lend-Lease material for direct use in the war against Japan.<sup>99</sup> On 5 July 1945, Truman ordered the Joint Chiefs “that the approval of the issue to Allied Governments of Lend-Lease munitions of war and military and naval equipment will be limited to that which would be used in the war against Japan, and it would not be issued for any other purposes.”<sup>100</sup>

The tension between the desired end state of the reconstruction of the European economy with free U.S. access to global markets to the current situation was quite obvious. Churchill and Stalin were disappointed about the U.S. decision to limit the Lend-Lease program. They had counted on the U.S. support. The relationship between the U.S. and its partners was embittered. When the rules were made clear on 5 July 1945, the Lend-Lease program became an opportunity at the same time. It was an additional short term incentive for the Soviet Union to join the war in the Pacific. In the long term any offer of economic aid or of a post war loan could be used as a means to encourage the partner to show more give and take.

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<sup>98</sup>Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 134.

<sup>99</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 232.

<sup>100</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 277.

## The Problem Statement

First Truman had to transform a confused, political uncertain Europe with a wrecked economy and a defeated Germany, and a Soviet controlled Eastern Europe into a Europe with a restored order and a reconstructed European economy which would offer the U.S. free access to the global markets. This reorganized Europe needed a negotiated peace with territorial settlements, freely elected governments in the freed Eastern Europe states, and a Germany not able to start a war again. Secondly Truman had to transform a Japan determined to continue the war and still occupying major parts of Korea and China into a defeated Japan whose mainland was to be occupied and Korea and China liberated. Furthermore the occupation of Iran by Allied forces needed to find an end. Stalin, who was disappointed about the adjustment of the Lend-Lease program (tension), had to be kept on board to join the war in the Far East. Furthermore, as the normative power of the factual, the Soviet Union had physical control over the Eastern Europe States. Hence any free elections in these states needed the Soviet Union's approval. Further threats included the British and Soviet intent to implement spheres of influence in Western and Eastern Europe; the Soviet's requests for reparations from Germany that would hamper any revitalization of the German industrial power as a potential motor for Europe development; and the obligation for the U.S. to take care of suffering Europe in case it could recover by its own means. Concerning Japan, the Soviet participation was seen by the U.S. as an opportunity to end the war earlier, but the Soviets needed to join the fight as soon as possible. Another opportunity was the use of the atomic bomb whose effectiveness was still uncertain. Bringing all these threats and opportunities, the end state with his desired conditions together, Truman had to develop his strategic approach for the Potsdam Conference.

### Truman's Strategic Approach

Based on the design methodology the strategic approach promotes the mutual understanding and unity of effort throughout the U.S. departments which were participating at the Potsdam Conference. Many factors had to be considered and were affecting Truman's strategy. Unfortunately, there does not exist a document with the header "The US strategic approach or the U.S. policy for the Potsdam Conference." In the preparation for the conference several documents were prepared which were a conglomeration of thoughts, objectives and rationales. Nevertheless, they provide the author with enough raw data to emulate Truman's strategic approach by including additionally his actions prior to the Potsdam Conference and the different advice he received prior to the conference by his staff. The main documents used are "The Berlin conference agenda prepared by the State Department;" "The Berlin conference comments and recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff;" "The Berlin conference background information;" and the "Berlin conference papers prepared by the State Department for the U.S. bilateral discussion with the USSR and with the United Kingdom."<sup>101</sup>

Truman's strategic approach had to provide the logic that underpinned the unique combination of tasks required to achieve the desired end state. That end state is taken to be the restored order in Europe, the reconstruction of the European economies, additionally the free U.S. access to these recovered markets, and the defeat of Japan. The strategic approach should describe the objectives that would enable the achievement of the key conditions of the desired end state. The strategic approach may be described using lines of efforts to link decisive points to achievement of objectives. The decisive point in this context may be understood as a critical factor when acted upon to allow the U.S. to achieve success. As already stated the key documents mentioned above did not follow this methodology. *The Berlin conference agenda prepared by the*

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<sup>101</sup>*Berlin conference file, 1945, Boxes 1 and 2, HSTL.*



*Department of State* was a collection of items proposed by the U.S., items proposed by the British, and additionally important matters which were likely to be raised. Some of these items were focused on procedures and organizations like the Establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers, some were focused on specific countries like Italy, and some dealt with information issues as the admission of American Press correspondents into Eastern Europe.

This monograph offers a strategic approach in the Appendix which links these different proposals and thoughts in the preparatory documents to five lines of efforts: Peace negotiations, Handling of Germany, Handling of Eastern Europe, Handling of further European issues, Handling of the Middle East, and Japan. The strategic approach is laid out graphically in the appendix.

#### Line of Effort: Peace Negotiations

According to the assessment of the Department of State, the experiences with the Versailles conference after World War I were negative. Hence, the line of effort to achieve a negotiated peace with territorial settlement starts with the U.S. proposal not to conduct a formal peace conference, but to establish a Council of Foreign Ministers of the five nations in the Security Council of the United Nations (Appendix, Figure 1, 2). This Council of Foreign Ministers should conduct a meeting shortly after the Potsdam Conference in order to settle all territorial claims and to prepare the peace treaty. Department of State included the domestic aspect of the necessary Senate approval of the draft peace treaty in their approach. Furthermore, states not represented in the council should be invited in order to deal all question of a particular interest to this state. The main idea of this line of effort was to avoid a formal peace conference at any price. This became a decisive factor in Truman's operational approach during the actual conference.

### Line of Effort: Handling of Germany

The line of effort dealing with the handling of Germany had been well prepared by the different U.S. departments in preparation for the Potsdam Conference. A Political-Military-Economical-Social-Infrastructure-Information (PMESII) approach was used to achieve the desired condition of an undivided Germany not able to start a war again, but at the same time having the opportunity to prepare for the reconstruction of their life on a democratic basis.<sup>102</sup> Politically, it was important that in a “sub-line of effort” the Allied Control Council was to be established as soon as possible in order to initiate the plans and agree upon decisions on open questions, especially on the determination of supplies available for reparations (Appendix, Figure 1, 3.1). To set the basis for a new German government, non-Nazi parties with the rights of assembly needed to be authorized and in a bottom up approach starting with local self-governments and then through the introduction of regional, provincial, and so called Länder administrations. The military sub-line of effort was mainly focused on the German demilitarization starting with a treaty for demilitarization followed by the complete demobilization of the German Armed Forces. This included the General Staff and all paramilitary organizations, the complete disarmament and the elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military productions, and the destruction of all arms, ammunition and their production facilities. Concerning the disposal of the German fleet and the merchant ships an equal share of vessels between the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union had to be agreed to. The German submarines would be sunk and the captured German merchant tonnage was to be divided equally between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the U.S.

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<sup>102</sup>PMESII is known in the National Security Modeling community as a comprehensive set of spheres of human behavior from which the elements considered during modeling should, and perhaps must, be drawn. It may also be considered a useful list of factors to be considered during crisis and emergency response. Joint Publications 5-0, III-10.

Economically, Germany had to be treated as economic unit and Allied control upon the German economy had to be imposed as soon as possible, especially control of German industry and all economic and financial international transactions (Appendix, Figure 1, 3.2). Primarily it was important to assure the production of goods required to meet the needs of the occupying force. Furthermore, the equitable distribution of essential commodities between the several zones had to be ensured and uniform economic policies needed to be adopted in all occupation zones. The Joint Chiefs of Staff underlined the necessity to allow the import of coal mining equipment and farm machinery.<sup>103</sup> Finally, linked with the military sub-line of effort, programs of industrial disarmament and demilitarization had to be carried out.

Uniformed economic policies meant, in consequence, that the dismemberment of Germany could not be a topic anymore, because only in a unified Germany the same economic rules could be applied without friction. The Department of State made this clear in *The Berlin conference—Agenda proposed by the Department of State* which stated that, “German partition is not recommended because it would be injurious for the rehabilitation of Europe” and could not be enforced, because it would be necessary to “erect substantial economic barriers. A custom-union or other forms of special economic collaboration...would jeopardize the purpose of partition.”<sup>104</sup>

Socially it was important to ensure the basic support for the displaced persons having fled from the former eastern part of Germany, the many displaced people who had been brought to Germany as forced laborers. Concerning the infrastructure, and closely linked with the sub-line of effort economy, were the quick increase of coal production and the development of an efficient

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<sup>103</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The Berlin Conference—Comments and Recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” Berlin Conference file, 1945, Volume V, Box 2, HSTL.

<sup>104</sup>Department of State, *Berlin Conference*, 116.

transportation system for its distribution. And finally, concerning information the German people needed to be made aware that they had suffered a total defeat and that it was their responsibility.

### Handling of Eastern Europe

The line of effort of handling Eastern Europe was mainly about ceding East Prussia, the former free city of Danzig, German Upper Silesia and a portion of eastern Pomerania to Poland while denying Polish requests for German territory west of the Oder. Here is the close link to the line of effort peace negotiations. Making a junctim between the extension of the western Polish boundary and the Polish political orientation became a decisive point for the U.S. Free elections in Poland could be rewarded with additional territory.<sup>105</sup> For Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, the reorganization of the present government and free elections, including all significant democratic elements, became a further decisive point. Until this reorganization had taken place, the democratic recognition and the conclusion of peace treaties had to be postponed (Appendix, Figure 1, 4.1).

### Handling of Further European Issues

The approach to handle further European issues (Appendix, Figure 1, 4.2) was to recognize the Austrian government and to ensure that U.S. troops occupy their zone. Furthermore, the free elections in Greece in late 1945 needed to be observed and supervised. Italy needed to achieve early political independence and economic recovery, hence the surrender terms required revision, a definite peace treaty should be negotiated as soon as possible and the territorial settlement with the former Italian colonies like Libya needed to be settled. The Yugoslavian-Austrian border should be maintained on its 1937 lines. The Soviets needed to

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<sup>105</sup>The Latin word *junctim* denotes the process of connecting two or more independent agreements (contracts, treaties, bills of law) according to the principle of one agreement will not be made unless all others are.

cooperate in solving immediate European economic problems and the freedom of communication and information should be guaranteed, especially in Eastern Europe. Finally it was important to prevent the Dardanelles from becoming an area of international dispute. The unrestricted use for peaceful commerce needed to be ensured as well as the use of further water traffic ways in Europe, for example, the Rhine River, the Danube River, and the Kiel Canal. Especially the free use of the Danube became very important for Truman since its opening would open for the U.S. a line of communication into Eastern Europe (Appendix, Figure 1, 4.3).

### Handling of the Middle and Far East

As far as Japan was concerned, the preparations done by the U.S. government were far less detailed than those for Germany. As an important first step a joint statement of the Allies outlining the future treatment and condition of a defeated Japan should be issued in hope that Japan would accept an unconditional surrender. Stimson wrote in a memorandum to Truman on 2 July 1945, that a “carefully timed warning given to Japan, by the chief representative of the U.S., Great Britain, China and, if belligerent, Russia calling upon Japan to surrender and permit occupation” might avoid huge losses which the U.S. would inflict in an invasion on the Japanese homelands.<sup>106</sup> To put additional pressure on Japan, it was paramount that the Soviets declared war on Japan and join the Allies in their fight in the Far East. The outcome of the atomic bomb testing was the next decisive point, followed by the eventual use. Concerning China, it was important that the Soviet Union accepted the idea that Manchuria and Formosa be restored to China and that Korea in due course should be free and independent. In a first step Korea was to be placed under a trusteeship China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the U.S. until Korea had demonstrated her capacity to govern herself (Appendix, Figure 1, 5).

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<sup>106</sup>Stimson memorandum to Truman on 2 July 1945, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 142-148.

### Summary

The overall strategic approach of Truman was to avoid the confrontation with the Soviet Union to speed the defeat of Japan. With regards to the Eastern Europe states Truman followed the optimistic approach that free elections could transform them in democratic countries, knowing very well that this would give U.S. access to their markets. The U.S. still believed that the Yalta agreement could be translated into action so Truman set forth incentives. Free elections had to be conducted and then as a reward, peace treaties could be negotiated.

For Germany, the U.S. had already prepared a detailed plan whereas the strategic approach towards Japan remained vague in the preparatory papers for the Potsdam Conference. The detailed plan for post-war Germany foresaw as a desired condition an undivided Germany not able to start a war again. An undivided Germany was important in the U.S. strategic approach since the creation of spheres of influence should be avoided at any cost. To more efficiently manage and lead peace negotiations and the territorial settlements, the decision-making countries to prepare the respective peace treaties were limited to the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.<sup>107</sup>

After having developed his strategy, Truman left Washington on 6 July 1945, taking a large staff with him to cover a broad range of topics on the conference agenda.<sup>108</sup> During the trip to Europe, on board of the *U.S.S. Augusta*, Truman and his advisors worked hard in reviewing the

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<sup>107</sup>In a letter to his wife on 20 July 1945 Truman summarized his strategy in his own famous Missouri “mule driver” word choice as following: “I have to make it perfectly plain to them (Churchill, Stalin and his own advisors) at least once a day that so far this president is concerned Santa Claus is dead and my first interest is the U.S. then I want the Jap war won and I want ‘em both (the Soviets and Great Britain) in it. Then I want peace – and will do what can be done by us to get it. But certainly I am not going to set up another boil here in Europe, pay reparations, feed the world and get nothing for it but a nose thumbing.” Truman’s letter to his wife from 20 July 1945, Merril, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 260.

<sup>108</sup>William M. Rigdon, “Log of the president’s trip to the Berlin conference,” II-III.

agenda prepared by the State Department. By the time the delegation landed at Antwerp on 15 July 1945, Truman had all of his objectives thoroughly in mind.<sup>109</sup>

### THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE

Potsdam was a convenient spot, and that was doubtless Stalin's reasoning for choosing it (to conduct the final conference of the Great Alliance). But the place had a meaning for him, too, that escaped the notice of 'Churchill and Truman. Potsdam is famous not for the Cecilienhof Palace, where the conference meetings took place, but for the palace of Sans Souci, built by Frederick the Great of Prussia in 1745. It was ...in the rooms of Sans Souci, that Frederick doubled the size of the Prussian Army...For Stalin, then, Potsdam was a memorial to the beginning of Prussian militarism, the end of German military might, and the continuous struggle in peace and war for power. Potsdam was an appropriate setting for the aims of all three leaders who met to confer, though only Stalin knew it.<sup>110</sup>

Truman and his party arrived in Potsdam on the evening of 15 July 1945. Churchill was already there and he had brought his potential successor Atlee with him. The results of the British parliamentary elections would be announced on 27 July 1945 and the British delegation wanted to ensure that pending the outcome a smooth handover would be guaranteed. Since Stalin, who had suffered a minor heart attack, which was a well-kept secret, had not yet arrived at Potsdam the opening session of the conference, scheduled for the afternoon of 16 July 1945, was delayed one day. Truman took the opportunity to receive Churchill for a "social visit" in the morning. Despite the informal nature of the meeting some general conclusions could be made. Truman stated in his memoirs that he and Churchill never had "a serious disagreement about anything, although they argued about many things." On the fundamentals of the great principles they were in great agreement. Another indicator that the British Prime minister would follow Truman's strategy was that he had not prepared his own agenda of talking points to present at the meeting.<sup>111</sup> In their discussion about the latest news from the Pacific theatre, there was a first slight change in

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<sup>109</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 67.

<sup>110</sup>Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam* (New York: M. Evans & Company, 1975), 70-71.

<sup>111</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 340.

Truman's objectives in drawing in the Allies—especially the Soviets—at any prize. Because of recent positive reports Truman had received from East Asia in the last days, he appreciated Churchill's generous offer to provide British troops, but he stated that the war in the Far East was going well enough without the British and the Soviet help.<sup>112</sup> Churchill enjoyed the meeting and was impressed with Truman's "gay, precise, sparkling manner and obvious power of decision."<sup>113</sup>

Another event on 16 July 1945 would change the strategic environment enormously and influence Truman's strategy. At 5:30 A.M. at the "Trinity" test site in New Mexico, the U.S. exploded the world's first atomic bomb. When Truman returned from an unscheduled visit to Berlin in the evening, Stimson handed the president a telegram from the War Department stating that the "results seemed satisfactory and already exceed expectations."<sup>114</sup> Even if the conference had not started yet, Truman began to adjust his strategy for the Pacific because the strategic environment had changed. The U.S. success gave hope for a faster end to the war now that the atomic bomb was available.

#### 17 July 1945

At noon on 17 July 1945, Truman met Stalin for the first time. During this meeting Stalin immediately confirmed the Soviet's intent to enter the war against Japan at the latest in mid August, "as agreed in Yalta."<sup>115</sup> There had been many of reasons for Truman to go to Potsdam, but the most urgent for him was "to get Stalin's personal confirmation on this issue which the

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<sup>112</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 75-76.

<sup>113</sup>Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 979.

<sup>114</sup>George Harrison, *Cable War* 32887.

<sup>115</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 45.



U.S. military had been most anxious to clinch.”<sup>116</sup> As a matter of fact Truman had achieved one of his objectives of his original strategy which was the Soviet entry in the war. Truman had reconsidered this objective but now stuck to it. The first plenary session of the Potsdam Conference began at 5:00 P.M. Truman brought as close advisors Byrnes, Leahy, Harriman, and Davies into the conference room. This is insofar remarkable, that Truman still relied with the latter on an advisor of the “dove-faction,” who would continue to promote a Soviet friendly attitude of the U.S. delegation during the whole conference.

Truman presided over the meeting following Stalin’s proposal and Churchill’s endorsement. He presented the following four topics for the agenda: first, the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers; second, the administration of Germany in the initial control period; third, the implementation of the Yalta declaration on Liberated Europe—notably on the Eastern European states—and finally, a proposal on a revision of the policy towards Italy (Italy should be admitted to the United Nations). Churchill added the Polish question to the agenda, while Stalin wished to discuss the question of the division of the German merchant fleet and the navy, German reparations, the future role of the Polish government in-exile in London, and the future treatment of Franco’s Spain. Although the Big Three agreed to refer the agenda topics for preparation to the Foreign Ministers, Stalin questioned the inclusion of China if the Council of Foreign Ministers was to deal with European problems. Truman had no objections to reconsider his proposal; nor did Churchill.

When the Big Three discussed the further procedure for the conference, Truman declared, “I do not want just to discuss, I want to decide.” The first meeting adjourned.<sup>117</sup> When Leahy reviewed the first meeting day he thought that Truman had “handled himself very well...He was

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<sup>116</sup>Mee, *Meeting in Potsdam*, 93.

<sup>117</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 45-57.

positive in his manner, clear and direct in his statements. He seemed to know exactly what he wanted to say and do.”<sup>118</sup> He followed precisely the agenda as prepared by the Department of State and he had already achieved his second objective. The idea of preparing the peace treaty by a Council of Foreign Ministers had been well received by his counterparts.

#### 18 July 1945

Stalin had “stayed up into the small hours of the morning coordinating Soviet troop movements towards the Far East, ordering his commanders to press on with greater speed.”<sup>119</sup> Stalin hastened tanks and troops to the east. On 18 July 1945 Truman and his party were well fed on this day. At 1:00 P.M. Truman had a private lunch in Churchill’s quarters, then at Stalin’s quarters at 3:00 P.M., “although most of his party had just left the luncheon table, they were ushered to a large dining table where a buffet lunch was served to them.”<sup>120</sup>

Truman and Churchill discussed during their private lunch the question of what to tell Stalin about the successful test of the atomic bomb. Churchill advised him to disclose to Stalin of the simple fact that Truman had the weapon. Truman was impressed.<sup>121</sup> They also discussed the question of the requirement for an unconditional surrender of Japan. It appeared to Truman that the Soviets and the British would accept some modifications of the unconditional surrender formula. If the U.S. did so too, “Japan might surrender to the Russians or at least through Russians channels. And then where would be American power be in the Far East? To keep victory from slipping through his fingers Truman needed to keep the Japanese fighting by

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<sup>118</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 398-399.

<sup>119</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 108.

<sup>120</sup>Log of the President’s trip to the Berlin conference, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, vol.2, 456.

<sup>121</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 81-82.

sticking firmly to the unconditional surrender formula. Then, when he dropped the atomic bomb the Japanese would surrender to America”<sup>122</sup> It now became clear to Truman, he would have to turn 180 degrees from his original strategy regarding the line of operation, *Handling of the Middle and Far East*. The Soviets had to be kept out and not drawn in the fight against Japan. Truman hoped to win the war before the Soviets were ready to engage themselves in the Pacific East theatre. In the meeting with Stalin, Truman’s fears were confirmed when Stalin presented him a note with showing some interest in peace that came from the Japanese emperor to his ambassador in Moscow.

The main topic of discussions during the Big Three meeting on 18 July 1945 was the challenge of defining what was meant when they talked about Germany. Truman proposed to understand Germany as the Germany of 1937. Stalin approved reluctantly the proposal: “It may be so understood from a formal point of view.” In other words, the Polish annexations were not yet officially endorsed. The meeting ended with a common understanding that all were in favor of a unified policy.<sup>123</sup> With the latter understanding Truman was still on track with his objective to treat Germany as an economic unit.

#### 19 July 1945

During the afternoon meeting the distribution of the captured German fleet was discussed. Stalin succeeded in claiming one-third of the German assets. Churchill gave in grudgingly. This ratio provided the Soviets a little bit more than what the Joint Chiefs had proposed which was a “one fourth share of each category of ships...be assigned to each of the

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<sup>122</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 111.

<sup>123</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 96-99.

four (including France) major powers.”<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, it can be said that it was still in line with the U.S. strategy prepared for the conference.

The decision on how to deal with Franco’s Spain was postponed after some tough discussions in which Stalin tested the British and the American honesty about their desire to see democratic governments established in Europe.<sup>125</sup> Churchill made the notable point, that it “was a question of principle to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries.”<sup>126</sup> For the first time Truman deviated from his objective to avoid spheres of influence in Europe. Spain was clearly in the Western sphere and Truman wanted to avoid that if the Franco regime was removed it would be replaced by a Soviet sponsored communist regime after democratic elections. This would have fit in the Soviet strategy as already described by Harriman three months ago. Truman started to change another one of his strategic objectives. “Spheres of influences” became an option.

#### 20 July 1945

The main topic on this day was to discuss the U.S. proposal on the future treatment of the former German satellite states, especially Italy. Truman made it clear, he wanted a quick peace treaty for Italy because the U.S. “was spending from \$750 million to \$1 billion to feed Italy this winter. The U.S. was rich but it could not forever pour out its resources for the help of others without getting something in return.” It was decided that the Foreign Ministers discuss the issue by including at the same time discussions about the other satellite states Romania, Bulgaria and Finland.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The Berlin conference, comments and recommendations, memorandum for the president,” Berlin conference file, 1945, Volume V, Box 2, HSTL.

<sup>125</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 144.

<sup>126</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 125.

<sup>127</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 174-175.

Truman's strategic approach to achieve an early political recognition of Italy as a prerequisite for its economic recovery was in danger when it was brought in a *junctim* with the other former German satellite states that were under the control of the Soviets. Both Stalin and Molotov were determined that "no favor should be granted to Italy that was not granted to Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria."<sup>128</sup>

#### 21 July 1945

The Polish question was the main topic in the plenary session this day. According to the Yalta Agreement, the Polish eastern border had been moved west to the Curzon Line. As compensation, Poland would receive territory in the west from Germany. Stalin's strategy was becoming obvious. The Red Army took and held territory in Europe and "Soviet-friendly" governments were established. These governments were to be recognized by Great Britain and the U.S. When Stalin withdrew the Soviet armed forces, the new Soviet satellites would remain as the legitimate and recognized governments. In case of eastern Germany, Stalin went a step further by allowing the Poles to move along behind the Red Army and settle while he expelled the former German population.<sup>129</sup> To legalize this approach he wanted to get the British and U.S. to sanction the new western Polish border.

Truman's strategic approach as developed in the last chapter was different. Poland could only be rewarded with additional territory when free elections were conducted. Many issues were linked with the question of the Polish territory. What about the Silesian mines as part of Germany for reparations? What would happen to the German population in the former territory? Who would feed them in the regions they had fled too? Churchill stated this very clearly: "The region

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<sup>128</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 74.

<sup>129</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 156.

in question (the Polish occupied territory) is a very important source from which Germany is to be fed.” Truman stated that it was not possible for the Heads of State to settle this question, rather “it was a matter for the peace conference.”<sup>130</sup> In review of Truman’s line of effort *Peace negotiations*, it was clear that Truman never intended to conduct a peace conference. Mee developed an interesting logic concerning this approach. When Truman spoke about a peace conference he “put the problem off to become a permanent bone of contention.” By using the idea of a peace conference he could prove that Stalin had already violated an agreement to wait for a peace conference by “inviting” the Poles into eastern Germany. If Stalin had violated an agreement, Truman would be able “to renege on an agreement, too....Truman wished to deprive Stalin from any reparations of western Germany. Truman might...surrender part of eastern Germany to Poland. The price for that would be reparations. Western Germany would keep its wealth to rebuild after war.”<sup>131</sup>

Again, modifications in Truman’s strategy could be realized. The *junction* changed as it was no longer German territory for the Poles following free elections. It would now be Soviet concessions on reparations for an endorsement of the new Polish western border. Truman ended the meeting that day with the statement that “the conference had apparently reached an impasse on this matter.”<sup>132</sup> The frontlines hardened. Stimson found a good explanation for the Soviet behavior, stating, “they (the Soviets) are crusaders for their own system and suspicious of everybody outside trying to interfere with it.” For Truman it became more and more evident that the U.S., whose system rested “upon free speech and all the elements of freedom, could not be

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<sup>130</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 210-213.

<sup>131</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 158.

<sup>132</sup>U.S. States Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 215.

sure of getting on permanently with a nation where speech is strictly controlled and where the government used the iron hand of the secret police.”<sup>133</sup>

#### 22 July 1945

The next day the main topic in the plenary session was again the question of the Polish western border. Churchill stated that “it would rupture the economic position of Germany and throw an undue burden on the occupying powers.” In addition he made clear that if “a settlement of the question was delayed...Poles would be digging themselves in and taking effective steps to make themselves the sole masters of the territory.”<sup>134</sup> Since the dead-lock in the discussion that day continued it was decided that representatives of the Polish government be invited to Potsdam to argue their claims.

#### 23 July 1945

In the morning meeting of the Foreign Ministers at 11:30 A.M., the struggle and fight for reparations continued and would become the main focus until the end of the conference. By 23 July 1945 all sides had identified the positions of their adversaries. Now they started to trade. Molotov was fighting for a fixed amount of reparations from the Ruhr area, something which the U.S. wanted to avoid. Byrnes made the U.S. position very clear for the foreign minister: “There will be no reparations until imports in the American zone are paid for. There can be no discussion on this matter. We (the U.S.) do not intend, as we (the U.S.) did after the last war, to provide the money for the payment of reparations.”<sup>135</sup> It can be said that the U.S. had gone a long way from the Yalta conference where Roosevelt casually agreed to \$20 billion in reparations “as a starting

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<sup>133</sup>Stimson, *Henry Stimson Diaries*, Reel 9, 1063.

<sup>134</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 248-249.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*

point.” Byrnes followed consequently the U.S. strategy which had been developed in the last three months. The U.S. was aware that if the German economy was to collapse it would engulf the European economy in the abyss. The U.S. would then lack a European export market with disastrous consequences for the U.S. economy. The change in the main effort in the U.S. strategy was evident. The idealistic motifs of a free Eastern Europe had so far influenced the U.S. policies. The U.S economic interests were now coming to the foreground.

In the plenary session of the afternoon, when the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus issue was discussed, the shift in the main effort of the U.S. strategy can be seen again. Truman immediately agreed to revise the so called Montreux Convention. This agreement that was signed in 1936. It gave Turkey the right to block the Straits to any shipping not only if “Turkey was at war but also if it seemed to Turkey that there was a threat of war.” Truman then introduced the idea of free and unrestricted navigation on inland waterways in Europe, like on the Rhine River, the Danube River, and the Kiel Channel. This would have provided the U.S. free access to the markets in Eastern Europe. Stalin understood this plan immediately and wanted to study the U.S. proposal before he intended to comment on it.<sup>136</sup>

Without great discussions Königsberg was transferred to the Soviet Union as already decided upon in Yalta. The Soviet Union wished to incorporate this German port into the Soviet Union because they wanted to have an ice free port in the Baltic Sea. This was a weak U.S. concession given Königsberg could only be reached via an artificial channel which was frozen several months in the year. Truman used the quid pro quo technique in order to achieve Soviet concessions on other topics.

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 303.



24 July 1945

On this the day the Polish delegation under the lead of President Boleslaw Bierut arrived in Potsdam and made their claim. Truman met Bierut at 4:30 P.M and pointed out very frankly that “he did not like the arbitrary manner in which the boundary question was being handled by the Soviet and the Polish governments.” He explained that the title “would not be valid unless approved at the peace settlement and that a disagreement would be a source of disagreement and a source of trouble in the future.”<sup>137</sup> It is important to note that Truman did not intend to conduct the peace conference. The Polish border was a dead pledge to get other concessions from Stalin. The demand of free elections in Poland was not even mentioned in this meeting. Churchill, who had been visited by the Polish delegation earlier that afternoon, had “rumbled impressively. There were questions of free elections, of the freedom of many democratic parties to participate in the elections.” Furthermore he went on to say that “eight or nine million persons have to be moved, and such a great shifting of population not only shocked the Western democracies, but also imperiled the British zone in Germany itself, where we (the British) had to support the people who had sought refuge there.”<sup>138</sup> Churchill was still fighting for a free Poland while Truman was willing to sacrifice his objectives.

In the meeting of the Big Three, progress on the issue of a peace treaty with Italy could be made by connecting it with peace treaties with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. All states should be treated equally. Truman played skillful with the diplomatic wording when he proposed that “peace treaties ‘for’ these countries should be prepared.” Furthermore he stated “the only government that could be dealt with was one they could recognize.” Churchill immediately understood Truman’s strategic approach. He said, that “they would make treaties

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 356.

<sup>138</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 193.

with governments which they recognized, but they did not intend to recognize the current governments. That was almost meaningless.”<sup>139</sup> Truman again was following his prepared lines of effort towards Eastern Europe as well as Italy, but to achieve his objective with Italy, he had to make concessions towards the former German satellites in Eastern Europe. At the same time he did not intend to recognize them as long as all U.S. prerequisites were not fulfilled.

After the meeting, Truman informed Stalin casually that “he had a new weapon of unusual destructive force.” He unveiled the secret. According to Churchill’s observations, Stalin seemed not to be impressed nor appeared as if he had an idea of the significance of Truman’s announcement.<sup>140</sup> It cannot be said what exactly Stalin knew about the atomic bomb when Truman informed him. For sure, he came to realize it on 6 August 1945, when the American crew aboard the *Enola Gay* released the bomb over Hiroshima to formally open the atomic age and with it the twentieth century’s nuclear arms race.<sup>141 142</sup> However, the existence of the atomic bomb was not used by Truman in Potsdam as a pressurizing tool to force Stalin to give in on one or the other open issue.

#### 25 July 1945

Churchill and Attlee were due to leave to London for the announcement of the results of the British parliamentary elections the next day. The parliamentary session was conducted in the morning and would turn out to be the last one with Churchill participating. It was conducted in the morning and again, the Polish question was on the agenda. Churchill made it clear in one of

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<sup>139</sup>U. S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 363-364.

<sup>140</sup>Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 985.

<sup>141</sup>*Enola Gay* was the Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber which became the first aircraft to drop an atomic bomb on August 6 on an enemy target in a war. The bomb, code-named “Little Boy,” was targeted at the city of Hiroshima, Japan.

<sup>142</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 222.

his last remarks that “if there was no agreement regarding the present state of affairs in Poland; and with the Poles practically admitted as a fifth occupational power; and with no argument made for the spreading of food equally over the whole population of Germany; this would undoubtedly mark a breakdown of the conference.”<sup>143</sup> Truman just watched the discussion. He seemed to have made up his mind to sacrifice Poland for more important objectives. But he made another important move and informed his colleagues that “agreements or treaties under the U.S. constitution had to be sent to the Senate for ratification.”<sup>144</sup> Truman opened a backdoor. If the Senate was not endorsing the negotiated agreements, the U.S. would not have to fulfill them. The meeting adjourned shortly after and Churchill left to be in London for the announcement of the election results. He would not return.<sup>145</sup>

#### 26 July 1945

While no plenary session was held due to the absence of the British Prime Minister, several subcommittees continued their work. As far as the treatment of Germany was concerned the U.S. delegation was mostly in line with the prepared steps in the line of effort “handling of Germany.” The main open topic was the determination of the reparations.<sup>146</sup> Truman and Byrnes

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<sup>143</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 387.

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*, 384

<sup>145</sup>Truman would summarize his feelings in a letter to Bess stating that “we (the U.S. delegation) have accomplished a very great deal in spite of all the talk. Set up a council of ministers to negotiate peace with Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland and Austria. We have discussed a free waterway program for Europe. We have set up for government of Germany and we hope we are in sight of agreement on reparations. So you see we have not wasted time. There are some things we can’t agree to. Russia and Poland have gobbled up a big hunk of Germany and want Britain and us to agree. I have flatly refused. We have unalterably opposed the recognition of police governments in the German Axis countries. I told Stalin until we had free access to those countries and our nationals had their property rights restored, so far as we were concerned there’d never be recognition. He seems to like it when I hit him with a hammer.” Letter to Bess, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 285.

<sup>146</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 394.

took the opportunity to fly to Frankfurt for a visit of General Eisenhower's headquarters and to talk to American troops in Hessen.<sup>147</sup>

While Truman was travelling, his team had been working for several days on the *Proclamation calling for the surrender of Japan, approved by the heads of government of the U.S., China and the United Kingdom*. While the paper was prepared, Truman had approved the bombing order for the use of the atomic bomb on 25 July 1945 in order to start the military preparations. Truman followed with the wording of the proclamation the strategy he had changed at the first day of the Potsdam Conference. Japan had to be kept in the war in order to set the conditions for an unconditional surrender to the U.S. after the atomic bombing. Therefore several aspects which might have shortened the war were not applied in the Proclamation. The demand for unconditional surrender still endured, no guarantee to retain the emperor was given, the probable Soviet entry in the war was not mentioned, and a threat with the atomic bomb as kind of a doomsday weapon did not occur.<sup>148</sup> Japan would continue to fight.

#### 27 July 1945

No plenary session was held on this day.

#### 28 July 1945

The new British Prime Minister Clement Attlee together with the new Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin arrived in Potsdam and met at 9:15 P.M. with Truman and Byrnes. The conversation centered on the possibility of settling the Polish boundary questions and reparations. According to Truman's assessment, "Attlee had a deep understanding of the world's problems, and I (Truman)

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<sup>147</sup>Log of the President's Trip to the Berlin Conference, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, vol.2, 462

<sup>148</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin, 1475-1476*.

knew there would be no interruptions in our (U.S and Great Britain's) common efforts.”<sup>149</sup>

Byrnes described the change in the British leadership as following. Attlee differed from Churchill “about as much as it is possible for people to differ. Attlee, in appearance and certainty in manner, gave one the impression of being a university professor...there was nothing of an actor in him, and it was difficult to picture this earnest, serious man having great appeal for masses of people.” Great Britain's stand on the major topics did not alter in the slightest by the replacement of Churchill by Attlee. This continuity of Britain's foreign policy impressed Byrnes.<sup>150</sup>

At 10:30 P.M. a plenary session was held with the new participants. The discussion dealt again with Italy's admission to the United Nations and the treatment of the other former German satellites. Truman made a very open statement concerning reparations from Italy: “If any reparations could be obtained from Italy, he was perfectly willing, but the U.S. could not spend money to rehabilitate Italy just to enable Italy to pay reparations to other countries.”<sup>151</sup> Once again Truman wanted to see that the U.S. investments in Europe would serve the purpose of a buildup of new economic partners.

#### 29 July 1945

At noon Molotov met Truman and Byrnes and informed them that Stalin had “caught a cold and the doctors would not let him leave the house.” For that reason, no plenary session was to be held. Byrnes nevertheless used the meeting with Molotov to discuss the two principal questions which remained outstanding to see “if they could reach a decision on those it would be possible to consider winding up with the conference.” The two questions were about the Polish

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<sup>149</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 395.

<sup>150</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 78-79.

<sup>151</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 464.

Western boundary and the German reparations.<sup>152</sup> Byrnes would play a decisive role the next three days to tie a package which would link the open issues in one compromise together. The main effort of the U.S. approach was now to maintain the industrial bases in the Western zones intact, to guarantee their economic recovery. A second observation can be made from the meeting. Decisions were now obviously prepared in direct bilateral talks between the U.S. and the Soviets. Byrnes was openly offering reparations from the Ruhr area, which was part of the British occupation zone. The British delegation was more or less excluded in the decision making and had to confirm what the “Big Two” had worked out.

#### 30 July 1945

Again no plenary session of the Big Three could be held since Stalin was still sick. Byrnes met Molotov at 4:30 P.M., thirty minutes prior to the “official” meeting of the Foreign Ministers to “talk on two or three questions of importance, which were still open.” The U.S. was ganging up with the Soviets. Following the quid pro quo principle he informed Molotov that “in regard to the Polish Western frontier, we (the U.S.) were prepared as a concession to meet the Soviet desire.” He then requested concessions from Molotov to give up his demand for a “definite figure either for tonnage or for dollar value of reparations he requested from the Western occupation zones.”<sup>153</sup> Having carefully set the stage, Byrnes succeeded to arrange a package deal in a 5:30 P.M. meeting with all three Foreign Ministers, which linked the Polish administration to a part of the Soviet occupation in Germany, the admission of Italy and the Balkan States to the United Nations, and the reparations from Germany together, making it clear that the U.S. would agree to all three or none, and that Byrnes and Truman would leave for the U.S. on 1 August

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 471.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 480-499.

1945. To ensure that Molotov understood the message, he repeated it in another bilateral meeting the next morning.<sup>154</sup>

### 31 July 1945

Since Stalin had recovered, a plenary session was conducted at 4:00 P.M. After a long and intense discussion the package which had been put together by Byrnes was accepted by the Big Three with smaller adjustments. The “take it all or leave it” U.S. approach had been successful. The package would read in the final proclamation as following: Soviet reparations claims should be removed from the Soviet zone. Polish reparation claims would be satisfied by the Soviets. Furthermore, the Soviets would receive from the Western zone 25 percent of usable and complete industrial capital equipment. For 15 percent of these reparations, the Soviets would have to exchange an equivalent value of food and commodities. For the U.S. it was the chosen formulation, “industrial capital equipment as is unnecessary for the German peace economy,” from utmost importance. This wording opened room for interpretations, because the determination of the amount and character of the industrial capital equipment “unnecessary” for the German peace economy and therefore available for reparations should be made by the Control Council, “subject to the final approval of the zone commander in the zone from which the equipment was to be removed.” In other words, if the U.S., British, or French zone commander would veto it, nothing could be removed.

Concerning the Polish Western border, the Big Three agreed that pending the final determination in the final peace conference the territory to the Oder-Neisse line should be under the administration of the Polish State and should not be considered as part of the Soviet zone of

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 510.

occupation in Germany. The U.S. kept another backdoor open since Truman never intended to conduct this final peace conference.

To conclude this package, the Big Three decided that “the present anomalous position of Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, and Romania should be terminated by the conclusion of peace treaties.” The preparation of a peace treaty for Italy was dedicated as first task the new Council of Foreign Ministers. With this peace treaty the Big Three could support an application from Italy for membership of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Council of Foreign Ministers was charged with the task of preparing peace treaties for Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary and Romania. The U.S. backdoor was again hidden in the wording. The conclusion of peace treaties with “recognized democratic governments” in these states would also enable the U.S. and Great Britain to support applications from these states under current Soviet control for membership of the United Nations. In other words, without the recognition as democratic government, no peace treaty could be signed. Dealing with the question of U.N. membership, the Big Three additionally clearly stated that they would not favor any application for membership put forward by the present Spanish Government.<sup>155</sup> The six nations in question, including Spain, became members of the United Nations in 1955.

#### 1 August 1945

At the final day of the Potsdam Conference, two plenary sessions were conducted. Two papers had to be produced: the public communiqué and a protocol, that would include some details not mentioned in the declaration. In a meeting at 4:00 P.M. the last open issues between the heads of delegations were discussed. Truman failed to get his ideas of free access to the European waterways into the text of the communiqué. For the first and the only time Stalin spoke

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<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 1441-1461.



in English when Truman insisted to include the idea in the final paper, asserting “No, I say no!”<sup>156</sup> The Big Three decided to refer the idea to the Council of Foreign Ministers. The U.S. objective could not be achieved.

The second and last meeting took place at 10:40 P.M. All conference participants went over the final text version of the communiqué. The establishment of the Council of Foreign Minister as the body to prepare the peace settlement for Germany was decided upon. There would be no repetition of the Versailles peace conference. Truman’s strategy was put into action.

The passages on the treatment of Germany were generally taken directly from the State Department’s preparatory papers for the conference dealing with the “political and economic principles of a coordinated Allied policy toward defeated Germany during the period of Allied control.”<sup>157</sup> The Allies wanted to ensure that Germany never again would threaten her neighbors or the peace of the world. At the same time the German people should “be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis.”

Supreme authority in Germany was to be exercised by the Control Council. Uniformed treatment of the German population throughout Germany was envisioned. Germany was to be completely disarmed and demilitarized. All arms and ammunition factories were to be held at the disposal of the Allies or destroyed. The German people should understand that they had suffered a total military defeat. The National Socialist Party had to be destroyed and war criminals should be arrested and brought to justice. The German education system had to be reorganized to promote democratic ideas and values. The political structure had to be federalized. Democratic political parties were to be allowed, freedom of speech, press, and religion should be permitted. The German economy should be made unable to produce military goods, and it had to be

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<sup>156</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 276.

<sup>157</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Berlin conference—Agenda*, Doc 2.

decentralized “for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts, and other monopolistic arrangements.” During the period of occupation Germany should be treated as a single economic unit. Payment of reparations should leave enough resources to enable the German people to subsist without external assistance.<sup>158</sup> The detailed conditions for reparations have been described in the last subsection. The U.S. side had enormously influenced these passages because it is more or less a copy from the thoughts prepared in *The Berlin Conference—Agenda proposed by the Department of State*.

A number of other minor verbal suggestions were made and discussed. In the minutes of the plenary meeting it is noted that “at one point Bevin criticized the quality of the English of the communiqué. Stalin implied that English that was acceptable to the Americans was acceptable to the Russians.”<sup>159</sup> Everybody then thanked Stalin for the excellent arrangements he had made for the conferences. Stalin answered, “We can call this conference successful.”<sup>160</sup> At 12:30 A.M., 2 August 1945, the Potsdam Conference was over.

#### TRUMAN’S ADAPTATION—AN ASSESSMENT

The question of Poland was a most difficult one. Certain compromises about Poland had already been agreed upon at the Crimea conference. They obviously were binding upon us at Berlin...The final determination of the (Polish) border could not be accomplished at Berlin. However, a considerable portion of what was the Russian zone of occupation was turned over to Poland at the Berlin conference for administrative purposes until the final determination of the peace settlement...Nearly every international agreement has in it the element of compromise. The agreement on Poland is no exception. No one nation can expect to get everything that it wants. It is a question of give and take—of being willing to meet your neighbor half-way. The action taken at Berlin will help carry out the basic policy of the United Nations toward Poland—to create

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<sup>158</sup>U.S. Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin*, 1441-1461.

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid.*, 586-601.

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*, 600-601.

a strong, independent, and prosperous nation with a government to be selected by the people themselves.<sup>161</sup>

This quote from Truman's *Radio report to the American people on the Potsdam Conference* on 9 August 1945 provides a first assessment how Truman perceived the outcome of the Potsdam Conference. He had been forced to accept some compromises. Admiral Leahy, wrote in his memoirs that his "general feeling about the Potsdam Conference was one of frustration. Stalin and Truman both suffered defeats. Several important proposals advanced by our Chief Executive—proposals that would have measurably aided the cause of lasting peace in Europe—were either turned down, watered down, or passed down to subordinate councils or commissions."<sup>162</sup>

Leahy's assessment indicates that Truman did not achieve all of his the objectives for the Potsdam Conference in 1945. To evaluate what objective, what desired condition, and what end states Truman could actually not accomplish it is necessary to revisit his emulated strategic approach that was developed in the first section and compare it to those he had foreseen to achieve.

Certainly, Truman reached several of his objectives. For him, "the conference was concerned with many political and economic questions, but there was one strictly military matter uppermost in the minds of the American delegates. It was winning of the war against Japan. On our (U.S.) program, that was the most important item."<sup>163</sup> The Soviet Union had joined the fight against Japan, hence Truman should have been satisfied, but he was not. The strategic environment had changed. The atomic bomb had proven its effectiveness with the test explosion

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<sup>161</sup>Radio report to the American people on the Potsdam Conference, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 407-415.

<sup>162</sup>Leahy, *I Was There*, 426.

<sup>163</sup>Radio report to the American people on the Potsdam conference, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 407-415.

at the Trinity test site on 15 July 1945. The Soviet Union's assistance was no longer required for the war against Japan. Truman wanted to change his objectives after the successful test but failed in keeping the Soviet Union out of the war against Japan. On 17 July 1945, he received Stalin's personal confirmation that the Soviets still intended to enter in the war against Japan. There was an ambiguous feeling about having achieved this initial strategic objective.

His next achievement, following his line of effort concerning the *Peace negotiations* was the agreement on the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Truman stated in his speech that, "the Council is going to be the continuous meeting ground of the five principal governments, on which to reach common understanding regarding the peace settlements. This does not mean that the five governments are going to try to dictate to, or dominate other nations. It will be their duty to apply, so far as possible, the fundamental principles of justice underlying the Charter adopted at San Francisco."<sup>164</sup> Truman had successfully avoided the mistakes that had been made twenty-six years before at the Versailles conference due to lack of preparations. This objective of his Potsdam strategy was achieved on 17 July 1945.

Along the line of effort of *Handling of Germany*, the political and economic policies to govern Germany during the occupation period had been decided upon in Potsdam according to the blue print the U.S. Department of State had brought along.<sup>165</sup> The German reparations question had been solved satisfactorily for the U.S. The adoption of the formula of reparations had also been a big break through. Stalin had receded from his insistence on a fixed dollar total amount and accepted the percentage principle taken out from assets unnecessary for the peace economy. Truman stated it the following: "We do not intend again to make the mistake of

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>The papers prepared by the State Department dealing with this topic had been very detailed on this topic.

exacting reparations in money and then lending Germany the money with which to pay. Reparations this time are to be paid in physical assets from those resources of Germany which are not required for her peacetime subsistence.”<sup>166</sup> Generally, the Germans in the western occupation zones maintained their potential for economic recovery. Another objective was achieved. Future potential markets for the U.S. economy in Europe could be restored. Nevertheless, each occupation power was extracting the reparations out of their own zone, apart from a small amount which would be transferred from the Western zones to the Soviets, split Germany in a Western and an Eastern part. History would prove that the objective of the U.S. to maintain a united and undivided Germany had fallen apart. By consciously and intentionally choosing the described reparations, the foundation for the different development speeds in West and East Germany were laid.

Concerning the line of effort, *Handling of further European issues*, Truman had been successful in his objective to “settle the future of Italy first among the former enemy countries. Italy was the first to break away from the Axis. She helped materially in the final defeat of Germany. A peace treaty with a democratic Italian government would make it possible for us (U.S.) to receive Italy as a member of the United Nations”<sup>167</sup> The U.S. aid already invested in Italy would be protected. Another objective was achieved, for the price that a second was not. The former German satellites Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Finland would receive similar treatments. The plan had foreseen that they had first to reorganize their present governments, free and unfettered elections were held, and then the conclusion of peace treaties was to be considered. This sequence had changed in the meetings from 29-31 July 1945. Truman outlined the way ahead: “One of the first tasks of the Council of Foreign Ministers is to draft proposed

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<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid.

treaties of peace with former enemy countries Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. These treaties, of course, will have to be passed upon by all the nations concerned. In our own country the Senate will have to ratify them.” One can hear Truman speaking about the backdoor he had installed. He did not confess in this part of the speech that he had deviated from his strategic approach. Truman started whitewashing. Knowing it better, he even gave a false color.

Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary... are not to be spheres of influence of any one power. They are now governed by Allied control commissions composed of representatives of the three governments which met at Yalta and Berlin. These control commissions, it is true, have not been functioning completely to our satisfaction; but improved procedures were agreed upon at Berlin. Until these states are reestablished as members of the international family, they are the joint concern of all of us.<sup>168</sup>

If Truman had been honest in his speech, he would have admitted that this objective was not achieved, as well as his initial aim to avoid the establishment of any British or Soviet spheres of influence in Europe.

The Potsdam Conference had finally established these initially undesired spheres of influence. Soviet power over Eastern Europe states was more or less consolidated. U.S. friendly governments were protected by the U.S, as were U.S. investments in these respective countries. This all served the desired U.S. condition to strengthen U.S. influence in European affairs. This objective could only be achieved, when the concept of avoiding spheres of influence was given up. Truman’s initial strategy had inherently competing objectives. When it came to the development of a package solution, Truman had to change his main effort. Having to weigh free elections in Poland versus Soviet concessions in reparations, the economic aspect gained the upper hand when an agreement on the future Polish border was agreed upon. Truman’s initially planned strategic approach had failed, but at the same time he achieved his objective to strengthen the U.S. influence in Europe. He was going to secure these spheres of influence with military

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

means. Truman stated it in his speech that the U.S. must do all the U.S. “can to spare her from the ravages of any future breach of the peace. That is why, though the United States wants no territory or profit or selfish advantage out of this war, we are going to maintain the military bases necessary for the complete protection of our interests and of world peace. Bases which our military experts deem to be essential for our protection, and which are not now in our possession, we will acquire.”<sup>169</sup> At the end, Truman accepted the spheres of influence he initially wanted to avoid. It becomes clear that when one compares the two objectives, avoid spheres of influence versus strengthen the U.S. influence in Europe, one has to realize that they were competing with each other, and they could not be achieved at the same time.

Last but not least, Truman, who had proposed the internationalization of all principal waterways in Europe as one of the war-preventative measures, was blocked by Stalin in a persistent way on 1 August 1945. Frustrated, Truman described his disappointment in his memoirs, “Stalin did not want this. What Stalin wanted was control of the Black Sea Straits and the Danube. The Russians were planning world conquest.”<sup>170</sup> In his speech to the nation, one can read Truman’s disappointment between the lines. He argued that “the U.S. proposed at Berlin that there be free and unrestricted navigation of these inland waterways. We (the U.S.) thought this is important to the future peace and security of the world. We proposed that regulations for such navigation be provided by international authorities...Our proposal was considered by the conference and was referred to the Council of Ministers. There, the U.S. intended to press for its adoption”<sup>171</sup> Truman did not achieve this objective. Stalin had blocked him successfully.

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<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 412.

<sup>171</sup>Radio report to the American people on the Potsdam Conference, Merrill, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 407-415.

Finally, it is necessary to review how Stalin reacted to the announcement that the U.S. possessed the atomic bomb. He seemed to be quite unimpressed. Open sources today have proven that he was well aware of what the U.S. was doing. Spies had reported to him, first hand, the progress of the Manhattan project.<sup>172</sup> Truman on the other hand did not use the atomic weapon as diplomatic trump card at the conference table. Truman could have played it hard by clearly explaining to Stalin the real power of the new weapon, but he did not. He just “casually mentioned to Stalin” that he had “this new weapon of unusual destructive force.” At Potsdam, Truman did not use the atomic bomb as a mean to achieve objectives.

To sum up, Truman adjusted some of the objectives of his strategic approach for several reasons during the conference. The reasons were changes in the strategic environment which led to a new assessment. Today’s literature uses the term “reflection in action” to describe the permanent reconsidering if the objectives or the desired end state can still be achieved. Furthermore, Truman had to weigh between different objectives in order to settle a deal. When he had to choose, the post war President favored economic advantages over political advantages. The deal on the Polish border was not made in a *junctim* with free elections, but it was linked to Soviet concessions on reparations and Italy’s membership in the United Nations. Both objectives serving the U.S. economy in the long-term. Before final thoughts are offered on the question of who started the Cold War in Potsdam, we can now answer finally the question of whether Truman went to Potsdam with a strategy with achievable objectives. He did not.

Was the Cold War started in Potsdam and who started it? The author has introduced the four schools which exist in the introduction. Stalin did it (traditionalists); Truman did it (revisionists); neither of them did it, it was just a mutual misunderstanding (post-revisionists); it

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<sup>172</sup>Robin Edmonds, “Yalta and Potsdam: Forty Years Afterwards” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) vol. 62, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 215.



was the clash of ideologies caused by the differences between the communist and the capitalist society (Post-1991). Having been born and raised in West Germany, the author was mostly exposed to the traditional view that the Soviets started the Cold War. Stalin prevented free elections in Eastern Europe, sold parts of Germany to Poland and did everything to divide Germany into two parts. Stalin wanted a buffer zone of Soviet friendly states in his periphery and prevented any U.S. attempt to allow free elections in the liberated Eastern European states. According to the traditionalists and most West Germans, Truman and the U.S. were the “good guys” who had always wanted to conduct a peace conference in order to solve all open problems around Europe and had done everything to avoid the establishment of zones of influence which would become the trigger for the close drawing of the Iron Curtain.

This view is too simple. The preparatory documents for the Potsdam Conference show that the U.S. never intended to conduct a peace conference which might have put the development of European security architectures on a broader basis. The most powerful nations in the world were to decide the future design in an exclusive circle. Truman sacrificed his objective of a liberated Eastern Europe as soon as it was endangering his primary aim to develop strong economic partners with the respective markets in Western Europe. Truman immediately changed his strategic approach of linking free elections in Poland to concessions concerning her western border when he saw the danger of excessive Soviet’s requests for reparations from the western occupation zones in Germany and Italy’s admission to the United Nations was at risk. Truman did everything to prevent the spread of communist ideas to the west. Consequently he allowed the Spanish dictator Franco to stay in place thus preventing a probable communist take over in free elections in Spain. It is often said the U.S. possession of the atomic bomb heightened the tensions which led to the Cold War. Despite this, while Truman did not use the atomic bomb to apply pressure on Stalin during the Potsdam Conference, it can be said that it influenced the further dealing with each other decisively. Mee describes it fittingly by stating that “very few turning

points of history can be specified precisely...here is one turning point in history that can be dated with extraordinary precision: the twentieth century's nuclear arms race began at the Cecilienhof Palace at 7:30 P.M. on 24 July 1945.”<sup>173</sup> One would have to engage in counterfactual history to predict what might have happened if Truman had stuck to his initial strategic approach and bundled a different package by insisting on free elections in Eastern Europe and offering economic concessions concerning reparations from the western zones and territorial concessions towards Poland. What can be said is that the Byrnes package contributed to a perpetuation of the zones of influences. So neither the traditionalist nor the revisionist is exclusively right. Both Truman and Stalin had their share in starting the Cold War.

Some arguments can be found that there were a lot of misunderstandings involved—as the post-revisionists argued. In preparation of the Potsdam Conference, the U.S. had hoped that the success of the United Nations would convince the Soviet Union that she did not need a sphere of influence in Europe. This was a total misinterpretation of Stalin's determination to create a cordon of buffer states at his western border in order to avoid a repetition of Hitler's surprise attack. Some of Truman's advisors had seen this error in the U.S. assessment. As shown in the sub-section on Stalin's strategic approach, Harriman had provided a to the point assessment on the objectives of Stalin's strategy.

Finally, good arguments can be found for the Post-1991 school. As early as 27 July 1945, Stimson pointed out that the U.S. problem with the Soviet Union arose, “out of the fundamental differences between a nation of...free people with a nation, which is not basically free but which is systematically controlled from above...and in which free speech is not permitted. It also becomes clear that no international relations can be established between two such fundamentally

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<sup>173</sup>Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 222-223.

different national systems.”<sup>174</sup> Stalin lived communism, a political and economic system that he believed had to combat and overtake capitalism. It is sensible how Truman—during the course of the conference—developed a feeling for this guiding idea which triggered Stalin’s behavior. Hence, he adapted his strategic approach and could not achieve all of his initial objectives.

This monograph emulated Truman’s strategic approach by applying the new design methodology. Truman and his team of advisors created their strategic approach without applying this contemporary U.S. military design methodology which is a tool for structuring the conceptual component of the integrated strategic planning process. They did it intuitively, making errors, reassessing the strategic environment and adjusting the objectives. If they had applied the design methodology prior to the conference, they may have been able to understand the complexity of the problem they were facing better. At the end everything had been thought through by Truman and his advisors but it was ill-structured. The experiment to visualize the problem that Truman was facing and to replicate and emulate his strategic approach by applying design methodology was a promising approach to understand Truman’s acting in the historical context and it provided useful hints to understand when and why Truman could not achieve all his objectives in the Potsdam Conference. It might be an interesting procedural method to review other historical examples.

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<sup>174</sup>Stimson, *Henry Stimson Diaries*, 1077.

## APPENDIX

# Truman's strategic approach

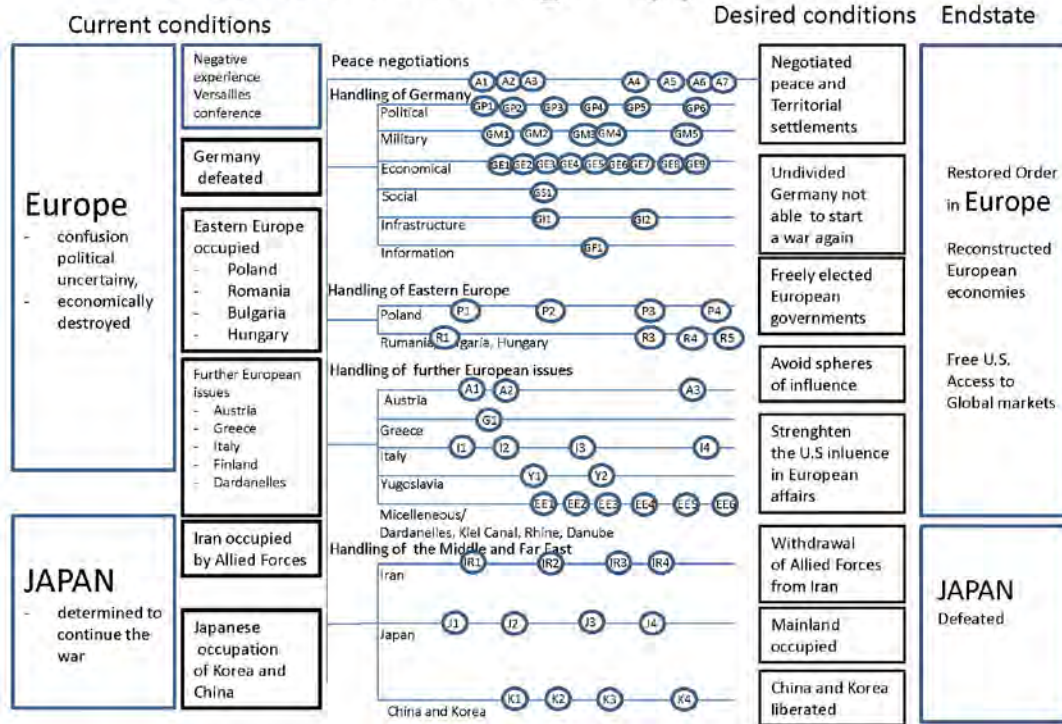


Figure 1. Truman's Strategic Approach

Source: Created by author

### **Peace negotiations**

A1: U.S. proposal for No formal Peace Conference

A2: Establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers (U.S., Soviet Union, U.K., France, China)

A3: Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers to deal with the peace in Europe shortly after Potsdam conference

A4: Include states not represented in the council to deal with questions of a particular interest to this state

A5: Settle territorial claims

- + No separation of the Ruhr from Germany or the left bank of the Rhine either through the creation of a separate state, through internalization or annexation by one or more neighboring states. Joint Chiefs of Staff considered no military objections to its eventual annexation by France
- + No annexation of the Saar by France, but may be an internationalization could be considered.
- + Minor frontier rectifications in favor of Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium may be considered.
- + No revision of the Danish—German frontier

A6: Prepare peace treaty

A7: Senate approval

Figure 2. Line of Effort Peach Negotiation

Source: Created by author

### **Handling of Germany**

#### **Political**

GP1: Establishment of Control Council as soon as possible as a control machinery

GP2: Initiate plans and reach agreed decisions on the chief military, political, economic and other questions affecting Germany

GP3: Return of all territories seized by Germany before or during the course of war

GP4: Control Council determine the supplies available for reparations

GP5: Authorization for the whole of Germany of Non – Nazi political parties with rights of assembly

GP6: Establishment of a German Government or local administrations

- Local self-government through elective councils
- Introduction of the local representatives into Regional, Provincial and Lander administrations

Military/Demilitarization

GM1: Treaty for Demilitarization of Germany with commitment to use United States forces

GM2 Disposal of the German Fleet and Merchant ships

- equal share of war vessels by U.S., the Soviet Union, U.K. and France
- sinking of the German submarines
- captured merchant ships: upon surrender of Japan the remaining captured German merchant tonnage is to be divided equally between the Soviet Union, U.K. and the U.S.

GM3: Complete disarmament and the elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military productions

GM4: Demobilization of the German Armed forces, including the General Staff and all para-military organization

GM5: Destruction of all arms, ammunition and their production facilities

Figure 3.1 Line of Effort: Handling of Germany--Political

Source: Created by author

<p><b>Economy</b>—Treatment of Germany as economic unit</p> <p>GE1: Impose Allied control upon the German economy</p> <p>GE2: Assure production of goods required to meet the needs of the occupying forces</p> <p>GE3: Ensure the equitable distribution of essential commodities between the several zones</p> <p>GE4: Control of German industry and all economic and financial international transactions</p> <p>GE5: grant in special emergencies extension of credits to Germany or Germans by foreign persons</p> <p>GE6: allowance of import of coal mining equipment and farm machinery</p> <p>GE7: Uniform economic policies to be adopted in all occupation zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform ration scales and allocations</li> <li>• Unrestricted interzonal movement of essential goods and services</li> <li>• Uniform policies for industry and agriculture</li> <li>• Unified control of German exports and imports</li> <li>• Centralized issuance and control of currency.</li> </ul> <p>GE8: Provisions of a central bank and establishment of a uniform system of exchange control and exchange rates</p> <p>GE9: Carry out programs of industrial armament and demilitarization</p> <p><b>Social</b></p> <p>GS1: Ensure basic support for the displaced persons from the rural areas in the East</p> <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>GI1: quick increase of coal production and redevelopment of an efficient transportation system for its distribution</p> <p>GI2: Reconstruction of an integrated transportation system</p> <p><b>Information</b></p> <p>GF1: Convince the German people that they have suffered a total military defeat and that it was their responsibility</p>
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Figure 3.2. Line of Effort: Handling of Germany—Economy, Social, Infrastructure, Information  
Source: Created by author

<p><b>Handling of Eastern Europe (Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary)</b></p> <p><b>Handling of Poland</b></p> <p>P1: Cede East Prussia (except for the Königsberg district), free city of Danzig, German Upper Silesia and a portion of eastern Pomerania to Poland</p> <p>P2: Deny polish requests for German territory east of the Oder</p> <p>P3: Determine political orientation of Poland</p> <p>P4: Consider extension of the western Polish boundary when political orientation is in line with U.S. vision</p> <p><b>Handling of Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary</b></p> <p>R1: Reorganization of the present governments</p> <p>R2: Postponement of democratic recognition and the conclusion of peace treaties until such reorganization has taken place</p> <p>R3: Tripartite (+ later 1) consultation to work out any procedures which may be necessary for the reorganization</p> <p>R4: Free and unfettered elections including all significant democratic elements</p> <p>R5: All three Allies should ensure that the voting will be in fact free</p>
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Figure 4.1. Line of Effort: Handling of Eastern Europe—Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary  
Source: Created by author



### **Handling of further European issues**

#### **Handling of Austria**

- A1: Recognition of an Austrian Government
- A2: US troops take their occupation zones in Austria
- A3: Establishment of close economic Austrian ties with one or more adjacent states

#### **Handling of Greece**

- G1: Observation and Supervision of free elections later in 1945

#### **Handling of Italy**

- I1: Early political independence and economic recovery
- I2: Revision of the surrender terms and the abolition of Advisory Council
- I3: Negotiation in the near future of a definitive peace treaty
- I4: Territorial settlements
  - Libya – very open to proposals
  - Return to Italian sovereignty under appropriate security controls
  - Partition of Libya /Italian sovereignty and Cyrenaica under British or Egyptian trusteeship or even for both parts of a divided Libya
  - International trusteeship for Eritrea and Italian Somaliland
  - No changes in the frontier with France
  - Italian province of Bolzano should be ceded to Austria
  - Compromise between the Italian 1939 frontier with Yugoslavia and the extreme Yugoslav claims
  - Decided on ethnic principles Trieste should be retained by Italy
  - Dodecanese should be ceded to Greece

#### **Handling of Yugoslavia**

- Y1: Maintain the Yugoslav-Austrian Border on its 1937 lines
- Y2: Any border changes to be decided in the peace discussions

Figure 4.2. Line of Effort: Handling of Eastern Europe—Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia  
*Source:* Created by author

### **Miscellaneous**

EE1: Seek of Soviet cooperation in solving Immediate European economic Problems

EE2: Freedom of communication and information in Europe

- Admission of American Press Correspondents into Eastern Europe
- More liberalize Russian policy in this matter in Germany and Eastern Europe
- Lift the "news blackout" in eastern Europe
- Stop of the censorship for press dispatches
- Permission for US journalists to enter the respective countries and to be granted necessary facilities

EE3: Montreux convention, The Dardanelles, Kiel Canal, Rhine and Danube, prevent the Dardanelles from becoming an area of international dispute

EE4: ensure the unrestricted use of the Dardanelles for peaceful commerce

EE5: Readjustment of the Montreux convention need to be readjusted, in time of peace the straits should be open to commercial vessels of all nations ingress and egress of war vessels of Black Sea riparian powers restrictions on war vessels of non-riparian Black Sea powers in time of war free ingress and egress of Black Sea powers in the absence of contrary directions of the UN only Turkey has the right to have fortifications in the Dardanelles

if Turkey is at war  
passage of warships shall be left entirely to the discretion of the Turkish government unless the course is interdicted by the UN

EE6: Free use of the Rhine, Danube and Kiel Canal

Figure 4.3. Line of Effort: Handling of Eastern Europe--Miscellaneous

Source: Created by author



**Handling of the Middle and Far East (Japan and Policy towards liberated Areas in the Far East)**

**Handling of Iran**

IR1: Restore Iranian administrative control and economy

IR2: numerical reduction and reduction of occupied areas

IR3: Withdrawal of all forces whose presence is not required for the prosecution of the far eastern war

IR4: Withdrawal of all forces from Iran

**Handling of Japan**

J1: Issuing a joint statement outlining the program for the treatment of the defeated Japan in the hope that Japan will accept the unconditional surrender when she knows how the future looks like

J2: Test of Atomic bomb

J3: Decision on use of the atomic bomb

J4: Unconditional Japanese surrender

**Handling of China and Korea**

K1: Adherence of the Soviet union to the Cairo declaration, that Manchuria and Formosa shall be restored to china and that Korea in due course shall be free and independent

K2: Place Korea under a trusteeship composed of China, Great Britain, Soviet Union and the U.S, until Korea has demonstrated her capacity to govern itself to be

K3: Development of Korea to a strong, democratic, and independent nation

K4: Full recognition of china's sovereignty of Chinese liberated areas

Figure 5. Line of Effort: Handling of the Middle and Far East

Source: Created by author

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